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PEWTER AND THE
AMATEUR COLLECTOR

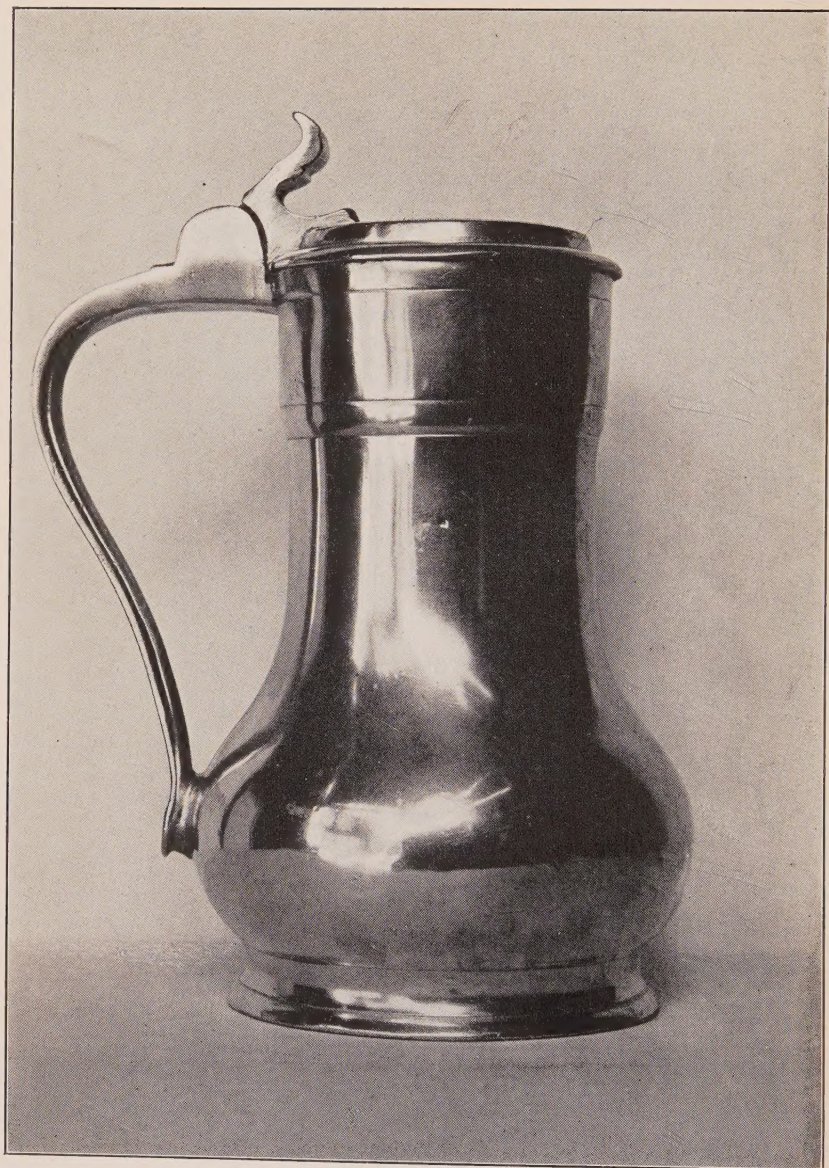


PLATE I—TANKARD

French; eighteenth century. Height, 8 inches; greatest diameter, 5 inches.
Marks: on the bottom, a small shield with crown above and AVS between.

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PEWTER AND THE AMATEUR COLLECTOR

BY
EDWARDS J. GALE

WITH
FORTY-THREE PLATES ILLUSTRATING THE SUBJECT

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NEW YORK
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1909

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PREFACE

THE chief object of this book is to assist amateur collectors of old pewter plate to a reasonable knowledge of the ware and to a direct understanding of their labours. Brevity, in a strict sense, has been deemed essential, as I especially wish to enlist the interest of those who temperamentally are intolerant of study and yet earnest in their desire for results. Critical discernment and a fair conformity to facts have been striven for, but all who have written on the subject of pewter probably recognise that it is the graveyard of congruent accuracy.

Historical matter has been eliminated as far as possible, further, perhaps, than is consistent with the subject, but the most sanguine author, even had he not my object in view, would hesitate to proffer the public another work on pewter conceived on the same basis as those which already ably cover the field of research concerning the origin and making of the ware.

Episodes of country trips in search of little antiquities and reminiscences of romantic adventures are not

PREFACE

disclosed in these pages, echoes of the collector's sighs at eventide are not heard, and studies of local dialects have been omitted, although I well know that such an attitude will seem to many little short of treachery to common precedent in America.

In the following work most of the general observations on pewter plate and collecting represent personal views and as such are open to criticism. The historical matter presented—unacceptably perhaps, but with the quality of conciseness—is built on a better foundation, and for the source of much of this I have, with proverbial frankness and more than proverbial sincerity, to admit indebtedness to the scholarly works of Mr. Charles Welch, Mr. H. J. L. J. Massé, Mr. Ingleby Wood, and Mr. Malcolm Bell.¹ A glowing tribute of gratitude is too easily set forth in words; for these authors mine is reserved to the truer one of a happy intimacy with and a very deep respect for their infinite labours. No enthusiast can go far without their aid; they have, indeed, graciously lessened the trials of this generation of collectors as well as the work of all future writers on the subject.

¹ "History of the Pewterers' Company," by Charles Welch, F.S.A.: London, 1902,

"Pewter Plate," by H. J. L. J. Massé, M.A.: Geo. Bell & Sons, London, 1904.

"Scottish Pewter Ware and Pewterers," by L. Ingleby Wood: Edinburgh, Morton, 1904.

"Old Pewter," by Malcolm Bell: George Newnes, London, and Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1906.

PREFACE

It is a pleasant duty to acknowledge the courtesy of Mr. John H. Buck, Curator, Department of Metal Work, Metropolitan Museum of Art; of Mr. Charles K. Bolton, Librarian, Boston Athenæum, and of Mr. John H. Edmonds for certain valuable references, and of Mr. Charles A. Stone for his interest in the subject, without which I would have failed to make any consistent study of collecting old pewter.

EDWARDS J. GALE.

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CHAPTER I

THE IRONIC POSITION OF THE AMATEUR COLLECTOR

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HE collector of old pewter plate seems always to have been in an ironic situation. In the early days of the latter half of the last century the few collectors who were discerning enough to care about the ware were in an exceptional position, finding much of the old plate at hand, but, regarding it historically, very little information indeed. Within the last ten years the position naturally enough is reversed; we find able histories on the subject but, unfortunately for the amateur, very little veritable pewter.

There are really only two reasons why those interested in the subject to-day are not thorough masters of it; the one, if it obtains, easily overcome, the other less readily—the first being lack of zeal in persistent study of literature on the subject, now happily within the reach of all, and

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the second and more serious the lack of the ware itself, for it is almost an essential factor to the proper appreciation of pewter that the student and the amateur should have constant personal contact with it. Indeed, intimacy with the ware is the first and last requisite, and serious study of the subject from an historical point of view, while certainly desirable, does not lessen the obligation nor obviate the necessity of "living with" the ware.

In view of the scarcity of good examples of pewter, the position of the amateur to-day requires perhaps a greater sense of humour than was necessary even in the previous generation if the game is to be kept a pleasurable one, and the moment it becomes irksome it becomes a burden that had much better be dropped. A collector obviously overburdened with his responsibilities is one of the saddest exhibits on earth, although only a little more so than one persistently entering the game without earnestness and playing it through without any apparent desire of advancing.

This familiarity with the ware itself can scarcely be too much insisted upon, and the amateur seldom appreciates the connoisseur's feelings



PLATE II—VASE

Probably English: nineteenth century. Height, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches: diameter at centre, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
Marks: none.

The type in general recalls the best of the simple work of the silversmith, but the robustness of the curve makes it a fitting pewter-design. The combination of grace and perfect simplicity is well illustrated in this vessel.

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in the respect, before mentioned, of living with it. None know the result of living with a product of the past better than collectors of early paintings, and there are few connoisseurs so bold as to wilfully decline permission, all too seldom granted, to live with a picture before committing themselves to buying it.

As to individual pieces of pewter, a like importance is not for a moment inferred, but as to pewter in general the amateur will find that there is no equivalent to actual intimacy with the ware, and that historical knowledge of the subject and even conscientious study of examples in museums will suffice but little without it.

Until some investigation of the subject is undertaken by the amateur his conception of pewter is, generally speaking, beautifully simple; pewter to him is only an alloy of lead and tin; he believes all good pewter to be marked and that ware lacking marks is not to be considered. He believes all marks of recognised types genuine, and leans on the small marks as a lame man on a staff; for these assuredly are hall-marks, and pewter bearing them must have been vouched for by recognised authorities, if not by the government itself! He loves the letter X, for it means

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only one thing—superfine quality! It is a beautiful pastime, simple and fascinating, admitting of few errors; cut an edge—if it is soft, grand! Discern a mark, splendid! The letter X, and the rose and crown, stamped thereon, and the vessel bearing such indisputable signs is a prize at any price!

The path for the earnest seeking for information concerning pewter leads naturally toward the history of the makers of pewter plate, and the pursuit is a complex one. The path is befogged and the signs contradictory, but the student advances, little as it at first seemed possible; and he learns sooner or later that pewter is not necessarily an alloy of lead and tin, that there are at least a score of other combinations possible in its make-up; that doubtless it is a fact that much good pewter bears no marks, and equally certain does it become that makers' marks, even in old days, were frequently counterfeited; that the letter X does not always denote superfine quality, and that hall-marks on pewter, in so far as they infer official stamping, are in reality a sad myth. Thus is the staff knocked from the dependent; thus are simple beliefs doomed and the once complacent man rendered despondent.



PLATE III—GROUP OF ENGLISH PEWTER

Dish or large Plate: probably seventeenth century. Diameter, 15 inches; width of rim, 3 inches.

Marks: on back of rim, Maker's touch, obliterated.

This is a well-preserved and rare example of the early type of dish with broad rim.

Bowl: probably early eighteenth century. Height, 3 3/4 inches; diameter at top, 6 inches.

Marks: on bottom, X crowned, a sprig with leaves and a flower.

Tankard, with cover: eighteenth century. Height, 6 inches. Marks: on rim near handle, X, and VR stamped below.

Jug or Measure: eighteenth century. Height, 5 1/2 inches. Marks: on bottom, Rose and Crown and IWG.

This is a model common to the pewterers of England and western Europe.

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Yet these are substantial facts, however rudimentary, however disconcerting. The humour of the situation begins with being forced to adopt the belief that hall-marks on pewter do not signify what they should, it increases in viewing the historians' agility to get away from the subject, and culminates with failure to find one law or rule of the manufacturers, or one custom, not subject to qualification if not to infinite variations. The irony of the matter lies in the knowledge that to be successful one must have facts, that the student has gone far for facts, and that of the seeming many unearthed few are incontrovertible. Still, it were foolish not to master these if the game is to become anything more than a childish one.

Whether the undertaking brings commensurate reward depends solely on the disposition of the investigator. That satisfactory results are possible has been proven, that good pewter is rare there is no doubt, that it can still be found is evident, but some knowledge, much judgment, and great patience are necessary to any substantial success in the matter.

It is natural that collectors of old pewter in England and on the continent should have a

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better field than we in America, just as they have in the matter of silver plate, and it is evident, upon reading any English treatise on the subject, that examples of pewter plate can still be bought there such as now are seldom if ever found for sale in this country. Even in Europe, however, it is with ever-increasing difficulty that any number of good specimens can be brought together without continued research, save when a collection is dispersed. The reason for this is not far to seek, for, while the output for several centuries was prolific, the nature of the alloy of which pewter vessels were made tended toward their easy disfigurement and consequent disuse, and the custom of melting old plate for material with which to make new was a common one from the middle of the sixteenth century to about 1820; and after that, pewter being very generally supplanted by earthenware and china and cheaper and more durable metal materials, it was as frequently, if less consistently, sold as junk; indeed, between 1820 and 1870, it is probable that countless tons of pewter plate were so destroyed.

Not to envy too far the present position of European collectors, it may be recalled that between 1870 and 1880 two of the earliest English

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collectors of old pewter of home manufacture found themselves facing these conditions, and they "lamented" because of the scarcity of good examples remaining. If, say in 1880, and still leading the field, they yet "lamented," what are we of to-day to do? There is no ratio one cares to attempt to comprehend between the pewter and two collectors of 1880 and pewter and the number who are seeking it to-day.

Regarding this same custom of sacrificing old vessels, Mr. Wood, writing of Scottish pewter, says: "This very practice of melting down the old ware, and the blindness of many people after pewter had ceased to be used, and even in recent years, to what was beautiful in line and form in the old vessels, is responsible for the entire absence of anything like a complete collection of the different pewter vessels, typical of the work of the Scottish pewterer of the sixteenth and seventeenth or even eighteenth centuries, in any of our museums.

"It is true there has been some attempt to form such a collection in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in Edinburgh, but amongst the twenty odd pieces of pewter ware of Scottish make there, only one can be safely said

PEWTER

to be of sixteenth century make, only one other belongs to the seventeenth century, while the rest of the pieces belong mostly to the latter half of the eighteenth century.

“In the Smith Institute Museum at Stirling a much larger and very interesting collection of Scottish and other pewter ware is to be found, but here again none of the specimens seem older, as far as it is possible to judge with the information at our command, than the latter half of the seventeenth century, and these pieces are very few in number.”



PLATE IV—DISH AND SALT CELLAR

Dish. English: eighteenth century. Diameter, 16½ inches.

Marks: on back, Maker's touch, obliterated, four hall-marks illegible, separate stamp, MADE IN LONDON.

Salt cellar. English: eighteenth century. Height, 2 inches.

Marks: none.

A pure design executed in superfine metal.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD WARE



ALTHOUGH the early pewter of the Oriental nations and of the Romans may be of interest to antiquarians, it is the purpose here to review the history of pewter chiefly as it interests the collector, and that only in outline.

As early as 1074 we hear of pewter being used for Church purposes in France, and two years later in England, and from that time on pewter was alternately allowed or prohibited for use in services of the Church.

Its adoption for domestic purposes undoubtedly pre-dates the earliest reference to it in that respect yet found, which is in connection with numerous pewter vessels used in 1274 at the coronation banquet of Edward I. Probably in Europe it was in use domestically long before that time.

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In Germany and Belgium the industry of the making of pewter plate was of such importance early in the fourteenth century as to necessitate the formation of regulations concerning it, and in England, in 1348, an association of makers of pewter was officially established and an ordinance passed regulating the quality of the ware and workmanship. At Mons—in Belgium—at Ghent, Bruges, Nuremberg, Paris, and Rouen the pewterers' craft and guilds became of importance during this century, but it is probable that pewter was not as yet extensively used except by the Church, the Court, and the nobility. It appears even at this time that old vessels were melted for material of which to make new, and as the century drew to a close the early and primitive forms were doubtless modified to a type more fitting the constantly advancing ideas of the period.

During the first quarter of the fifteenth century the craft was plying its trade in most of the countries of western Europe, evidence of its manufacture in Spain by the year 1406 appearing in regulations of that date. In England the Pewterers' Company was given greater recognition and additional powers, and by the end of the century Scotland, later the home of much excellent



PLATE V—MEASURE

Probably English: early eighteenth century type. Height, 11 inches.

Marks: none.

A form of standard measure honestly expressive of its purpose and the material used.

THE OLD WARE

pewter plate, witnessed the incorporation of Hammermen—which in that country included pewterers—in many of the larger towns. Mr. Wood, in his historical review of the Scottish ware, states that prior to 1493 the art of pewter-making must have been in the hands of a few isolated makers, and that the majority of pewter vessels used in Scotland before that date were in all probability imported from France, Flanders, and Holland; and in lesser quantities from England, owing to the relations then obtaining between the two countries.

The general use of pewter had now become common, and was no longer confined to the nobility nor exclusively to the wealthy class.

The next, the sixteenth, century witnessed the introduction of the so-called decorative ware, but happily the makers in England were slow to adopt and quick to discard the alluring but ill-suited methods practised from that time on by various continental makers of great and lesser repute. Recollecting the constant strife in State and Church, and the consequent wilful destruction during this period, as well as the constant necessity of converting goods into money and the now common custom of melting old vessels,

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it is not strange that sixteenth-century pewter is rare even in the museums.

Early in the seventeenth century pewter was being manufactured in America, and by this time, in England and continental Europe, efforts were being made to widen the range of its usefulness; candlesticks appear in an inventory of 1615, pewter spoons and forks in one of 1672; tea and coffee pots came into use in the latter part of the same century, although few may now be found dating before the middle of the succeeding one. The earliest date on the touch-plates, referred to hereafter, that are still preserved at Pewterers' Hall, in London, is 1640. In France, the pewterers now began to gild, silver, and even lacquer their wares in the forlorn hope that the wealthy classes would still be attracted by them. Toward the end of this century there was everywhere visible in the pewterers' trade the inevitable result which the introduction of other materials, for purposes for which pewter had predominated for nearly four centuries, was bound to bring about, and the supremacy of the craft constantly lessened from this time on. White-ironsmiths in Scotland and the makers of earthenware in England and of glass and china throughout Europe



PLATE VI—DISH AND PEPPER POT

Dish. English: eighteenth century. Diameter, 18 inches.

Marks: on back, HENRY HAMMERTON (1733), within device largely obliterated; also Rose and Crown within device; LONDON, in rectangle.

Pepper Pot. English: eighteenth century. Height, 5½ inches.

Marks: none.

An excellent type but with not quite the style of the smaller one reproduced in another plate at full size.

THE OLD WARE

were the entering wedge of the final dissolution which in the next century became almost complete.

The eighteenth century was practically the closing era of the pewterers' trade, and yet naturally the preponderate portion of American pewter is of that time, although both here and in the provincial towns of other countries there were continued efforts in its production fairly effective until about 1820, and in isolated cases, with but little result and of no practical importance, up to and even later than 1840. Commercially it was displaced by earthenware, glass, and china, and various metals or alloys of a quality which permitted greater ease and economy in working and which were either better fitted for hard usage or for plating with silver.

A general but by no means complete list of articles manufactured in pewter is given here, but the collector should remember that the forms of almost every one of the articles enumerated were of infinite variation, depending not alone on the era and country, but on the maker's skill and fancy, although throughout the production of all time and countries there was happily a very general acceptance of certain types and a fine con-

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servatism that characterises most of the ware with the exception of that exotic and fortunately small class which was treated in sculpturesque and other weaker and supposedly ornamental manner.

PEWTER WARE

For Church Use:

Altar candle-sticks, Alms dishes, Baptismal bowls, Bénitiers,
Chalices, Flavons, Lavers, Patens, Sacramental cruets.

For Drinking Purposes:

Beakers, Cups, Mugs, Tankards.

For Conveying and Measuring Liquids:

Flagons, Jugs, Measures of all types and sizes.

For Domestic Use, Other than the Above, and Chiefly for Table Service:

Bowls, Chargers, Cruets, Cup plates, Egg cups, Ewers,
Forks, Hot-water dishes, Ladles, Mustard pots, Pepper
pots, Platters, Plates, Salt-cellars, Saucers, Spoons,
Sugar basins, sifters, and sprinklers, Trenchers, Tureens,
Vegetable dishes.

Special, ditto:

Coffee-pots, Chocolate-pots, Spirit lamps, Salvers, Tea-
pots, Tea-caddies, Trays.


Small Miscellaneous:

Badges, Buckles, Candle boxes, Candle-sticks, Food bottles,
Herb canisters, Inkstands, Lamps, Money boxes,
Powder-puff boxes, Salt boxes, Sconces, Snuff-boxes,
Taper holders, Tobacco boxes, Toys, Vases.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD WARE

(CONTINUED)

HE composition of old pewter plate has been thoroughly reviewed by Mr. Massé, Mr. Bell, and others in its infinite variations, and it is obvious that it is almost impossible to exclude from the generic term many vessels of alloys that the collector will nevertheless wish to exclude from his collection.

It may be taken as a general basis that of the pewter found to-day the alloy will usually consist of tin and lead, and less frequently of tin and copper, or of tin, copper, and antimony. There are something like forty authentic variations recorded, and in reality the composition as actually put forth by makers of different times and countries was, if of a certain similarity, constantly so variable as to place the whole matter in its intricacies

PEWTER

beyond the collector's interest, and wholly into the hands of the analytic chemist.

Whatever the alloy used, tin always predominated as the chief component part.

The pewter of the Romans appears from analysis to have been composed of tin and lead in varying proportions, of which the average was approximately 75.3 parts of tin to 24.7 of lead. As early as 1348 the Pewterers' Company of London prescribed two qualities, the best to consist of tin with the addition of as much brass (copper?) as the tin "of its own nature" would take, the second quality being tin with about 20 per cent. of lead. Other qualities, if not at that time allowed, were in general use later, and the lead frequently ran as high as 40 per cent. in the poorer alloys.

It is generally assumed that from the first quality were made plates, platters, etc.; from the second, standing vessels, bowls, etc.; and from the alloys having a greater percentage of lead, cheaper vessels for public-house use.

The simplicity of the alloy, as stated above, held, however, only for certain times and articles; antimony as the lesser component part was frequently used, the resultant alloy being of greater

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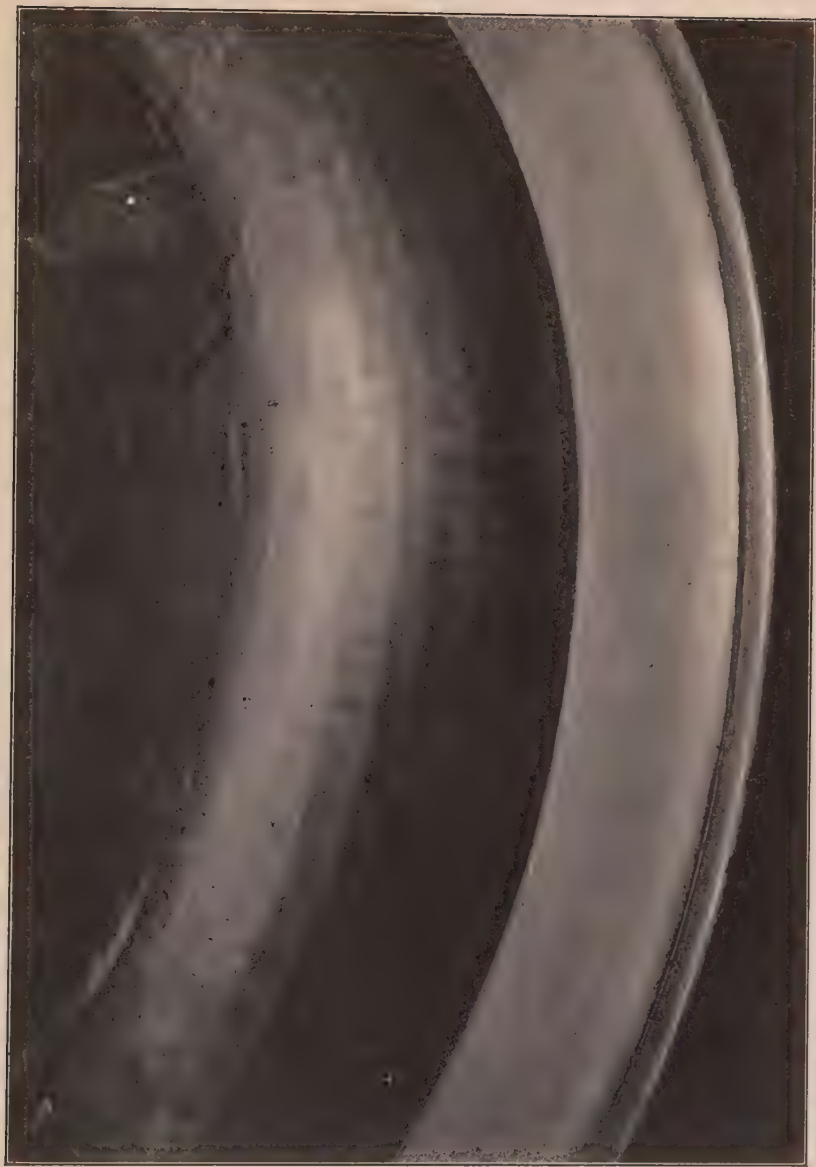


PLATE VII

Portion of *under side* of a large English Plate showing the hammer marks on the curve between the body and the rim. Such marks in some degree are present on all plates of good workmanship. It will be found that many American plates, especially of the later period, are devoid of like evidence of conscientious work.

THE OLD WARE

hardness and of a more brittle character and better adapted for working into certain shapes. Bismuth and also zinc were sometimes introduced in addition, respectively, to the lead or antimony used.

The French pewter of the eighteenth century consisted of tin and copper in the proportion of 100 to 5, and of tin and lead in the proportion of 100 to 15, and the last regulations concerning it varied very little from the latter, being 16.5 parts of lead to every 100 parts of tin or in certain cases to 83.5 parts.

It would seem that American pewter of the eighteenth century very generally approximated the alloy of the French of the same period, although after 1790-1800 it undoubtedly in many instances fell below, and often far below, that standard.

Incidentally it may be noted that French pewter plate of good alloy and simple form very frequently appears superior to the English product of the eighteenth century, and almost invariably to that of Belgium and Germany.

For the storage of wines and acids it was essential that lead should not exceed certain limits in the composition of pewter vessels, and

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it obviously was desirable that it should be limited in the alloy of which large vessels were made if they were successfully to serve their ostensible purpose. Of all English and continental ware which the collector is likely to acquire, it is in the public-house measures that lead will be found in greatest excess, and it is evident that a certain form of commercial sense clouded the usual acumen of the makers in this respect.

As the marking of and marks on pewter plate are matters closely connected with the history of the guilds, this subject is treated in a succeeding chapter notwithstanding the fact that it is equally connected with the manner of making the old ware.

That pewter was made by the masters of the craft, lovingly, is evinced equally in the beauty of form of most of the ware and in the workmanship displayed, a workmanship that has withstood careless handling, for centuries, of articles never especially cherished for the intrinsic value of the metal of which they were made. In the simple forms of nearly all standing vessels, with their proportionate values and gradations, one finds oftentimes a greater charm than in the richer and more highly decorated utensils of silver, and



PLATE VIII

Portion of an English Plate showing results of the heavy efflorescent-like corrosion sometimes found on the ware. In this case the piece has been cleaned, and the nature of the surface disclosed (these shown as actual pits) illustrates the reason for rejecting articles which are corroded beyond the degree of oxidation normal to old and neglected ware.

The representation is deceptive, at first glance, in that the defects of the surface appear to be raised, which was true of the efflorescent-like substance originally on the ware, but as this was removed the resulting crater was laid bare and it is really shallow pit marks which show in the illustration.

THE OLD WARE

wherever a certain robustness not found in other ware was developed, it never was accentuated to grotesqueness; it is, indeed, in many of the sturdier forms, which the weight and inexpensiveness of the alloy allowed, that pewter in its most attractive character is found. That it could be worked with equally satisfying results in fine scale is demonstrated in the detail of certain jugs, flagons, etc., and in such articles as candlesticks of even the later years of the decline of the Craft.

It should be recognised that the beauty of old pewter is unique and that the ware has specific characteristics; it is, indeed, a true exponent of the worth of simplicity in even minor forms and a constant reminder that pure design and good proportion need no superficial decoration. The bloom of the alloy is unequalled by metals in common use, for pewter has a surface texture and at its highest polish absorbs light to a degree in perfect balance with its reflection, which is not the case with brass and silver. It has not only this texture, but a colour subdued and intangibly allied with its bloom, which is perhaps the chief reason of its subtle influence upon even the uninitiated.

PEWTER

The making of pewter was, if not an art, happily allied to it, and whether the article was cast, or wrought wholly by hammering, the finish was never slighted. Even in the multiple reproduction of articles from the same mould no loss of pride in the worthiness of results is manifest. Doubtless, the better the mould, the less the after work, but on all old pewter finishing by hand was a very important part.

Such articles as could be cast in one piece were so produced, spoons, bowls, and the bodies of porringers being of sufficient simplicity as to be so made. More complex forms required, as they would if cast to-day, two or more moulds, the resultant sections being joined together; the line of joining may be seen on the inside of most of such ware, but on the exterior this was obliterated by burnishing or covered with a raised moulding. Unless of unusual size, plates were cast and finished by turning and by hammering the curve between the body and the rim. The final polish on all ware was produced by burnishing.

The hammering of the cast product, and especially the process of hammering out large dishes, or trenchers and chargers, direct from rolled

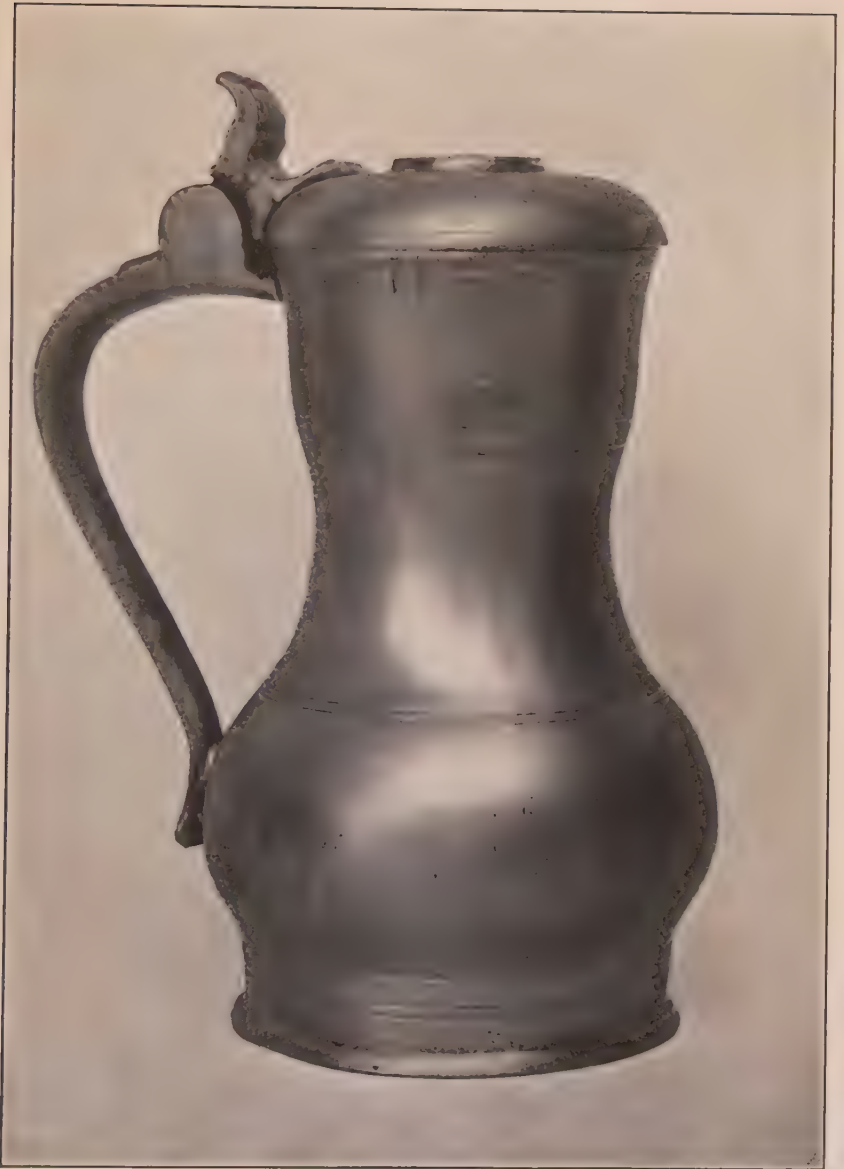


PLATE IX—TANKARD

Flemish: probably seventeenth century. Height, 7 inches; diameter at centre, 4 inches.
Marks: on top of cover, Rose crowned.

A form of tankard closely approximated by many eighteenth century vessels of English make and one well illustrating the good qualities of pewter-design.

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sheets, was a matter in which true pride was taken by the craftsman; flat ware coming from the moulds was of such a nature that the process of hammering was adopted in completing the desired curve from body to edge, and this was essential to stiffness and durability of such utensils as, like dishes and plates, were subject to great strain; to a certain extent, the more hammering the better, although over-hammering would result in a brittleness of the material, this being also true of the wholly hammered and non-cast dishes.

It is the thoroughly hammered plate that has, when properly held and lightly struck, the true sonorous ring—unless the alloy be inferior. Indeed, any percentage of lead in the alloy will lessen the resonant quality and the ware will cease to respond with the introduction of approximately 20 per cent. of lead as a constituent part.

To a collector, therefore, the difference between plates of precisely similar appearance is often a great one, owing to this variation, either of alloy or of method employed in the finishing; and quite aside from these points, which in the selection of flat ware are the most important, the collector will, if making a choice of plates that are of *like* alloy and workmanship, select those which have

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the edge thickened on the face rather than on the back, or rather than those having the edge, as is frequently the case, without any circumscribing reinforcement. This line or band, in reality one of construction, results, true to the best principles of art, in one of decoration, and to it frequently is added the purely ornamental incised line on the body of the plate.

In connection with this line or band of reinforcement it is well to note that Mr. Wood believes that plates having the band on the back are of an older type than those having it on the face.

Stiffness—that is. due resistance to deflection or pressure—is a quality that should be present in flat ware of good alloy and proper workmanship, and to a justifiable extent in ware of whatever shape; the greater the amount of lead in the alloy the more the ductility, resistance to pressure being correspondingly minimised; also the less the hammering the less is the material condensed to the stiffness required in good plate-metal ware.

Great weight is not necessarily an attribute of good pewter, although two opposing factors are here to be considered: for example, of two plates of *like* alloy, size, and pattern but of dif-

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ferent weight, the heavier would in general be the better, as it would imply concentration of the ware by hammering, a recognised benefit; but of two plates of *different* alloy but like size and pattern it well might be that the heavier would be the inferior one, as the more lead in the alloy the greater the weight. It is therefore a matter for some consideration, and while experience is the great factor, the amateur can by testing the ware as to its quality of stiffness and its ring, determine whether the weight is attributable to inferior alloy or to good workmanship.

While excessive weight does not necessarily imply fine quality but often the contrary, utensils seemingly deficient in weight should at once arouse suspicion, for the weight of good pewter plate, if a matter requiring some discernment, does not greatly vary, except proportionally, with the size of the article, so that accentuated deficiency beyond the normal weight of such would lead to one of two inferences, either that the ware is not good pewter or that it is not old. If having generally the appearance of pewter but having also an abnormal lightness, the article in question may be of Britannia metal ware and spun, not cast, or of other alloy of more

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modern inception, or even pewter of the present day, thin and ineffectually wrought.

To the experienced one the weight and stiffness of any article of pewter plate almost certainly foretell and mean as much as its ring, and to feel of the alloy is almost the equivalent of a microscopic examination.

The great amount of oxidisation found on pewter that has been subjected to deleterious influences, and even the dirt or tarnish due to neglect, are serious impediments to the amateur in judging of the ware, but these conditions do not wholly prevent a verification of the material and but very slightly alter the ring, if, indeed, that were ever an inherent quality, nor do they appreciably affect the original weight and stiffness of the ware.

The collector will probably find it difficult to secure much of the true ware that will be of a period earlier than the first quarter of the eighteenth century, although occasionally plates, flagons, and tankards seemingly of the one previous are acquired. As a general thing the preponderant number of articles in recently formed collections will be found to date from 1740, and this will be largely the case as regards pewter of



PLATE X—DISH AND INKSTAND

Dish, with handles. French: probably late eighteenth century. Diameter, 11 inches.

Marks: on back, an eight-point heavy star in circle, with BF before and FIN after, both within plain rectangles.

Inkstand. English: probably early nineteenth century. Length, 7½ inches; height, 2 inches.

Marks: inside, on bottom—1, Leopard's head; 2, B & V within oval; 3, X; 4, a star.

In this example one entire side is devoted to quills or pen holders and the other is subdivided into three compartments, in one of which is the original sand-box. The feet are well executed and of an early pattern.

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American origin, and it is practically sure to be the case as regards measures, candlesticks, oil lamps, tea, coffee, and chocolate pots.

Age, however desirable, is not under the circumstances the chief point to be considered, that after all being, when the judgment has matured, to collect what one most wants—which in the matter of pewter usually implies the most pleasing or the most satisfying. As the rarest pieces are not necessarily the most pleasing, and are oftentimes the least effective in a collection, the amateur will probably decide for himself, if it becomes a matter of choice, which specimens will best repay him for the time and money expended, but it is earnestly suggested that only practically perfect pieces be considered in any case.

Indeed, if the amateur will strictly limit himself to the acquisition of such, he will be saved the regrets to which so many have been subjected in the light of later knowledge.

Pewter ware that has been injured by the loss of any original constituent part, by having been altered, by having been mended—except judiciously at opened joints—and especially pieces repaired by having had holes soldered up, however well done, or pieces having holes purposely

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bored or otherwise, or having perceptible rents or breaks, the author considers imperfect and usually undesirable. On the other hand, almost any amount of scratches, dents, and distortions, provided the piece is intact in its entirety, will do little or no harm, and such specimens are considered practically perfect, for a workman skilled in the matter can readily put them in a condition closely approximating their original state without the addition of any foreign material or new parts.

Just the amount of oxidisation and consequent erosion that precludes or admits of the desirability of a piece, is a matter almost impossible to define, and is one to which the amateur should give early attention, as only from experience can he really judge of the outcome, and many of the most valuable articles will be found having a greater or less amount of oxidisation on the surface unless they have been well cared for. As a general thing, oxidisation and tarnish that is fairly thin and uniform of surface will have done little harm and can be removed, leaving the original surface of the alloy intact; but oxidisation resembling an efflorescence, that is, irregularly raised in the form of a perceptible coating



PLATE XI—JUG

Probably English: late eighteenth century. Height, $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches; diameter at centre, $3\frac{3}{4}$ ins. Marks: none.

This specimen reflects the influence of the silversmith's designs. The form is good but the beaded decoration at the rim superfluous.

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with a variation of surface, will, when removed, be found to have caused erosion of the original surface and of the actual material, leaving it uneven and more or less covered with pit or pock marks. The process of cleaning pewter is taken up in another chapter.

Analytical study of the forms of pewter ware is a matter not only practically neglected by most collectors but one that is seldom even considered. This is well enough if the collection is to be a haphazard assortment consisting of pretty nearly everything that comes to hand which resembles pewter either in form or alloy, but a finer perception is advocated, and the amateur who trains his eyes and his brain and exerts due restraint will eventually be possessed of a collection infinitely superior to those formed on cursory methods and the all-acquiring habit. Whether the ultimate purpose be a display of pewter plate for decorative effect or the acquisition of museum specimens, the methods employed require the same essentials of trained faculties of analytical observation and discrimination, if anything more than a mediocre result is desired.

The study of profiles or outlines of standing vessels is one phase of the subject just men-

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tioned that the amateur would do well to interest himself in from the start.

It may have been by premeditated intent, but it is far more likely the result of a certain instinct born of successive generations applying their craftsmanship to a like purpose, that most pewter vessels were given a supremely effective line of profile, whether it be of extreme delicacy or of exceeding robustness.

In certain articles this line is almost of a pure Greek type, and more often than not consists of a combination of exquisitely graduated planes or of simple curves wholly classic in spirit.

To those who really give attention to this matter is pewter doubly enhanced, for no others can so fully appreciate these finer points of the ware; and beyond this additional enjoyment lies a sense of security in the selection of various types.

With plates and larger dishes, aside from the points before mentioned in connection with these, it is also advisable to study the proportional relation that the rim or border holds to the sunk portion or the body, and also to note the plane of the border and the line of the curve between it and the body. This is a matter, seemingly trivial,



PLATE XII—ENGLISH MARKS

Reproduced at somewhat less than double actual size. Front the back of a plate 6 1/2 inches in diameter. Example of eighteenth century marks. The type varied.

- 1 (on left) Rose and Crown between pillars, with GRACIOUS above and STREET below.
- 2 (on right) Maker's mark: a bird with pillars and arch, within, a dove with spread wings and horseshoe in its beak; above, RICHARD; below, KING.
- 3 (between) X, crowned.
- 4 (below) within rectangle, R.D.-KING, IN LONDON. (Richard King, London, Warden, 1745.)

Hall-marks: none.

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that in reality is one of the greatest aids in making an effective collection of flat ware, which, after all, forms the best basis upon which to build. The rarest plates, and in this case the most satisfying, are those having rims of a width apparently excessive in proportion to the diameter of the sunk portion.

While these are unusual, the collector will notice that of plates equal in size, with borders of usual type, those having even a fraction of an inch extra width of rim will be the most effective. As to the plane of the rim, it was usual to adopt the legitimate principle that the deeper the hollow portion the greater the angle of the rim, but in plates and dishes of normal depth it will be found that the nearer the rim approaches a horizontal plane the finer the effect—this, to a certain extent, depending on the curve, and the less abrupt that is the truer the statement. The back of the curve should always be inspected, and if multiple, minute, and varying planes, or facets, are not in evidence farther inquiry will usually disclose a non-hammered product and probably one of inferior metal and workmanship.

In selecting candlesticks the connoisseur's attention is usually attracted to the base—that is,

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the portion immediately below the shaft proper. The average candlestick was beautifully modelled above the base whether it consisted of long curves or of a combination of smaller members, but the base more often than not failed through over-heaviness to co-ordinate with the shaft. Here the ways of the collector diverge, for many of the early specimens disclose this trait while some of the more consistently designed candlesticks are of a later period.

The broad sweep from the vertical shaft to the horizontal base is also a part not successfully worked out in most oil lamps of the early nineteenth century, the makers seeming to prefer two abortive arcs joined together rather than a longer, deeper modelled, and more refined curve, which would have given equal utilitarian and otherwise more pleasing results.

In tankards and flagons of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the profile line is usually one of symmetry, and the vertical planes end almost invariably in a satisfactory and subtle curve or flare at the base. These vessels, especially when having covers, were also successfully terminated at the top, the profile line, however robust, being carried with a pleasing continuity to

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include the cover, whether of the nearly flat or of the high domed variety and whether with or without the finial or knob.

The handles of these vessels of the best periods are oftentimes of the purest design, although they deteriorated sadly either in form or workmanship, or both, in later days; the thumb-knob and hinge of the covered vessels, as well as the position of each, are worth attention, as their characteristics varied considerably with the period and the country of manufacture. In the early nineteenth-century vessels the finish of the thumb-knob seems to have received less attention than any other part, and as this knob was usually of good form, and an excellent casting in itself, the final finishing would have been but a small proportion of the entire labour—too small a portion to so neglect—yet the rough line marking the joint of the two moulds used in the casting process is often found untouched on the finished product, and an entire absence of hand finishing about a crested or foliated knob is frequently noticeable in vessels of the period referred to.

The difference in beauty of form even in such small utensils as pepper-pots is very marked, many of the less interesting ones having little style of

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outline and nearly flat tops, the whole being dull and stupid compared to those of the best type, which have an amount of grace concentrated in their small bodies that is really remarkable. The high domed tops of these latter usually terminate in a small finial or knob of a wholly satisfactory conception.

Handle sockets of tea and coffee pots vary considerably in form, and although a minor matter it is well to be conscious of the difference, since some of the pots have exceptionally well-modelled sockets and, in such cases, usually a well-modelled spout.

Very few tea or coffee pots will be found, however, made of the alloy that may strictly be considered pewter. The great proportion of these pots, although exhibited and sold as pewter, are either of early Britannia metal or of later similar but inferior material.

A comprehension of the general style of successive periods is, of course, essential if the collector cares even approximately to ascribe a date to specimens not so marked as of themselves to divulge it.

Examination of the material alone, as has been explained, is a great aid, but results, in this re-



PLATE XIII—TOBACCO BOX

English: eighteenth century type. Height, 6 inches; base, $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches square.
Marks: on bottom, four hall-marks, illegible. Inside is a plain leaden weight with a knob.

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spect, only in the indefinite, although as far as it goes satisfactory, determination of the specimen in question being either old or otherwise.

It is no easy matter to go beyond this, as only authentic pieces acceptably dated will serve as a preliminary guide to the amateur, and probably not one out of five hundred collectors has his specimens classed either as to country or period. As access to private collections therefore will seldom result in any aid in this respect to the amateur, he has recourse only to museums and to such publications as have the ware therein illustrated so classed. With regard to the latter there is no better work than that of Mr. Bell, who has with infinite care consistently dated most of the many well-selected specimens shown in his book on old pewter.

This indeed, of all matters connected with pewter plate, is where experience chiefly counts, and little reliance can be placed on the judgment of any save those qualified by mature study of this specific branch of the subject.

The concentric lines sometimes found on the inside of tankards, flagons, and other hollow standing vessels, denote final finishing of that portion by turning on the lathe; and while that

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process seems to have been employed in connection with the cast ware of nearly all periods, an undue prominence of these lines will cause certain doubts as to age of the specimen bearing them. Years of excessive use of any article would naturally cause such lines to lose at least their pristine sharpness, and continuous scouring would have so smoothed the surface as to nearly obliterate all traces of the original lines; and it seems probable indeed that in many, perhaps most, vessels of the best periods these lines were obliterated by the maker by more conscientious work on the lathe, and perhaps by a process of after scraping. However that may be, collectors will find cause for some thought when confronted with ware bearing such lines unless all other conditions tend to place it beyond suspicion, for much modern ware and a considerable portion of the less well wrought ware of the first part of the nineteenth century disclose these concentric lines on the inside with suggestive prominence.

Here, as is so often the case, no one rule will apply, and the collector has again to rely on judgment born of experience.

Flat ware such as plates, bowls, and porringers may generally, however, if showing such



PLATE XIV—JUG

Probably English: eighteenth century. Height, 8 inches; greatest diameter, 6 inches.
Marks: none.

This specimen is significant of the special possibilities of pewter-design. The body, cover, and nose are freely modelled, the handle and purchase plain but graceful, the contour simple yet inspiring, and the general result satisfactory and without obvious effort,

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lines on the back, and invariably if there is any evidence of the same on the front, be considered as somewhat inferior, or as recently made ware; for the process of making and finishing such articles, if properly carried out, pre-disposes either of the existence of these lines at all or of their survival after the final burnishing.

A great deal is said about the possibility or probability of specimens having been so cherished as to have become cabinet pieces or mantel ornaments from the first, and it is pointed out that such, however old, would offer less opportunity to the ordinary influence of time and use, and would therefore have the appearance of new ware, disclosing the concentric lines of the finishing lathe work—if these originally existed—and would not, on the other hand, have upon the surface those special and minute marks and mars which usually develop with age and incidental use. This is perfectly true; no doubt such specimens exist and occasionally find their way to the market, but it obviously is foolish to accept the theory—where such condition of the article obtains—unless style and quality are both significant of its probability, and this will be exceedingly infrequent.

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With regard to decorated pewter, and ware in imitation of silver-plate models of florid types, it seems almost unnecessary to supplement the vigorous opinions expressed by Mr. Bell, with which all collectors should be in full accord; it may be added, however, that pewter requires decoration to about the extent demanded by a Doric column, and can about as well as the latter be successfully subjected to trivial ornament and extraneous trappings.

The ware was primarily the product of economic conditions: of a substance of the least possible intrinsic value and of forms devised wholly for utilitarian purposes. Its intent, composition, and use all protest against anything but downright reasonableness of form and such simplicity of decorative qualities as are inherent factors to that condition.

An English or American teapot or candlestick or a German tankard treated with sculpturesque adornment, or covered with florid ornamentation, will attract or repel the amateur according to his taste, but to those conversant with the true types from long association, the effect is almost uniformly one of antipathy. Even in the lesser matter of handles the collector as he advances

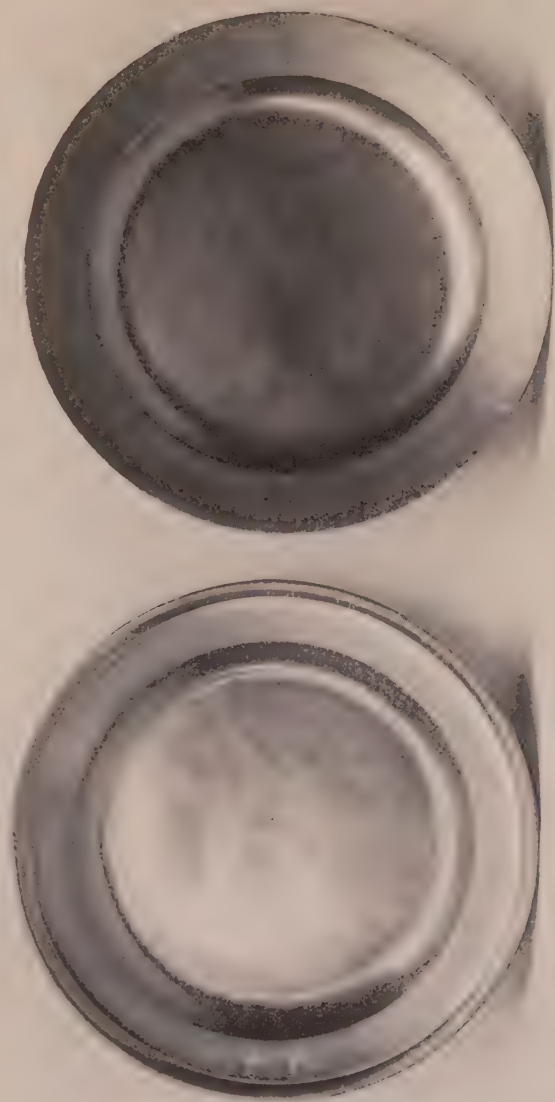


PLATE XV—PLATES

English eighteenth century. Diameter, 8½ inches.

Showing different styles of rims, the one plain on the face, with the edge enlarged and stiffened on the back; the other with the edge reinforced on the face, a decorative effect being secured by a constructive feature, as so often is the case in pewter of the best period.

Marks: Plate on the left: Golden fleece within elliptical device with florid border.
Hall-marks: 1. Golden fleece; 2. Lion's head; 3. Pedestal; 4. S. E. mark.

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leans more and more toward those which, devoid of all decoration, but with graceful and gratifying lines, of themselves fulfil all the necessities of decorative quality, and these generally are the ones not designed in imitation of contemporary types of the silversmith's art.

The subject of prices or the cost of pewter plate is one not easily entered upon, nor one that can really be carried far enough in actual detail to be of any assistance without the possibility of ensuing detrimental results.

As the material itself is of little value, as individual pieces are small and creative of no great decorative effect, and as few pieces are really of great antiquity, or representative of great labour, and as none are the product of great masters, current prices are evidently the result, not of inherent worth, but of a valuation brought about by the combined circumstances of a comparatively limited supply and so equal a distribution of it amongst a large number of dealers as to make the actual supply appear even smaller than it really is. This, in conjunction with a now submissive public, and the increasing number of buyers, has resulted in an unfortunate inflation of prices.

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The situation is somewhat different to-day from that even of ten years ago, because it is practically useless to attempt to buy antiques from the original owners in the country. Usually without any knowledge of the actual worth of such, they have heard just enough about values in general to develop preposterous ideas and hopes, and out of very ignorance place prohibitive prices on articles of little value, so that while some years ago the collector could well afford the extra time and energy involved by buying in the country, at the prices asked, he to-day will almost invariably save both time and money by buying in the towns, and usually by buying of the best dealers if desiring important pieces. Some of the romance certainly is lost; we are facing, however, actual conditions, and in these pages are contemplating the desirability of results more than devious methods of pleasantly disposing of time.

Until the dealers see the benefit to be derived by buying intelligently abroad and making consistent importations, or until interest in the subject temporarily flags, there appears to be no basis for the hope that prices will become relatively more reasonable. It is to be hoped at least that dis-

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cerning dealers will see the advantage of making prices proportional to the importance of individual pieces, a part of the business which as yet has received little intelligent action, and which would result probably in a benefit to them and in removing a burden from collectors of the more ordinary specimens.

CHAPTER IV

THE ENGLISH CRAFT: MARKS ON ENGLISH PEWTER PLATE


HE collector, even if intolerant of the details of the history of marks on pewter plate, should at least be acquainted with some general facts, and in America to-day we are chiefly concerned with the history of the making and the marking of English pewter plate; for of all the ware sent to this country in the early days, or to be found here to-day, by far the greater proportion is of English origin, and furthermore that of our own makers of Colonial times is much closer allied to the English product than to that of any other country. It is therefore essential to have some knowledge of the progressive development of the making of pewter plate in England, and the coeval conditions by which the ancient Company of Pewterers was fostered and permitted to become not only an all-authoritative power in the specific



PLATE XVI—BOX

Probably Dutch: eighteenth century. Height over all, 6 inches; base, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches square. Marks: on top of cover, UCM on a shield with a demi-eagle.

The metal is inferior but the knobs well modelled and finished.

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trade but a wealthy and respected association and an influential factor in the commercial life of the country.

That confusion of laws and their frequent revocation arouse some doubts as to certain points is not more than is to be expected; the general issue is of sufficient importance to the collector.

The earliest information respecting an association of makers of pewter in England is in an ordinance of the Craft of Pewterers for the year 1348, and regulations of that time enforced a high standard of quality and workmanship upon all makers of the ware in England.

In 1473 Edward IV granted the Craft or Company its first charter, giving it, besides certain legal benefits, the right to search for false wares. From that time on the Company exercised control over an established and important industry, and for the next three centuries was granted successive rights by charter and legislative enactments.

In the latter part of the fifteenth century the Company built a hall and to this hall was taken all confiscated ware—that is, ware found to be below the standard, or otherwise not in accordance with the regulations of the Company.

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Such ware was melted and the resultant worth of the metal divided between the Crown and the Company.

Not only was the selling price of pewter fixed by the Company, and standards for various alloys, but definite weights for specific articles were established.

That there was considerable variation in the composition of pewter, both as permitted by law and otherwise, has been hereinbefore explained.

The first compulsory enactment, requiring pewterers to put their touches on all vessels made by them, originated in 1503, and this statute with various amendments continued in force for about three centuries. It would seem, however, that the marking of wares was a voluntary custom of makers for many years previous to the date when it was made obligatory, and it is equally evident that the maker's touch was frequently omitted and occasionally counterfeited. These marks or touches of the maker were made by a die or punch impressed upon the pewter, and consisted of either the initials or name of the pewterer, or some device with or without initials or name, in accordance with the varied regulations of the Company.



PLATE XVII—FLAGON

English: early eighteenth century type. Height, 8 inches; diameter at base, 3 inches. Marks: none.

The proportion is excellent and the gradation of outline delicate. The extreme slenderness of this specimen is unusual and somewhat more typical of Belgian design than English.

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From the time that marking of pewter ware with the maker's touch became obligatory such touches were registered at the Company's Hall by impressing the same upon an official plate (a sheet of soft metal) provided for that purpose, and these are known as touch plates. This registration was compulsory, and if any change was made in the maker's mark it was re-impressed upon the touch plate.

Touch plates existed, therefore, from about 1500, but the early ones have been lost, five only being extant, these covering a period from 1640 to the year 1824, when the last touch was struck on the fifth plate of the Pewterers' Company.

Most of the early marks were small and as a rule contained the maker's initials within the bounds of a simple device.

The Company's regulations concerning a maker's name in full appearing either within or beside his touch varied with considerable frequency between the years 1670 and 1697; after the latter date, however, the name was generally struck in full. Like variations also occurred in its regulations for the use of the word London, it being finally permitted either within the touch or struck separately.

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In the eighteenth century some of the touches were so amplified that even the quality of the metal was stated, this hitherto having been prohibited, and it was doubtless only one of the many signs indicating the Company's loss of strict control over the trade. The right of search, that previously had been an important factor of power, the Company now seldom exerted; it had, indeed, been gradually forced to give this up—outside of London—early in the preceding century.

After 1747 touches could vary in size, a by-law allowing a large touch on all large wares and a smaller one on articles of lesser size.

Touches used by the makers other than those specifically individual and those denoting the town of the manufacturer consisted of the crowned rose, and the letter X crowned or otherwise. The rose was an emblem of the Company, and some confusion exists as to whether its use was not at one time reserved for *official* marking at the hall. In general, however, and certainly after 1564, it could be used with permission of the Company, and it is probable that for some years thereafter it indicated a special class of ware, or ware made by favoured members. This touch of the rose and crown, more or less identical in

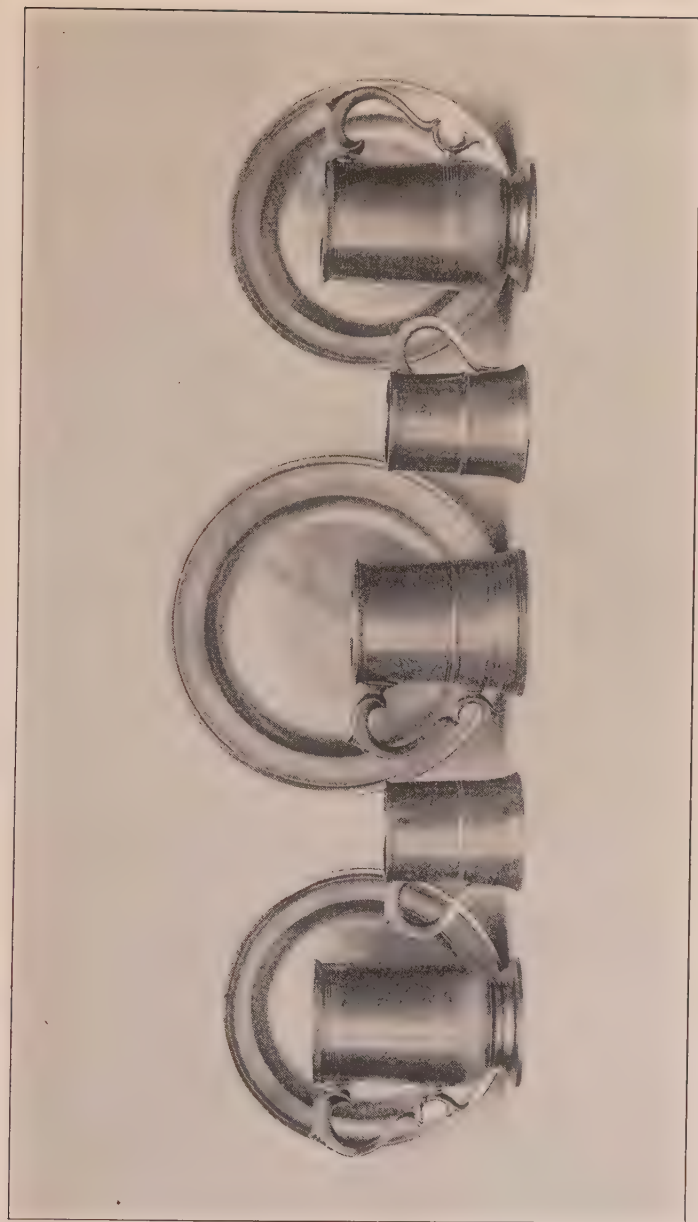


PLATE XVIII—GROUP OF ENGLISH PEWTER

Plates: eighteenth century. Diameters, 8 inches and $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
 Marks: end plates, TOWNSEND, within device, and separate stamp, MADE IN LONDON.

Central plate, FASSON, within device, and four small marks.
 Mug in centre: eighteenth century. Height, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; capacity one pint.

Marks: inside on bottom, HUX (1728) in plain square.

Mugs at end: probably late eighteenth century. Height, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; capacity one pint.

Marks: none.

Measures (smallest mugs): nineteenth century. Height, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches; capacity half-pint.

Marks: inside on bottom, illegible; also various official marks around rim.

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design, is also found on French and other continental pewter.

The letter X, also struck by the makers, was prohibited for ordinary ware and was a mark allowed to distinguish extraordinary—*i. e.*, plate metal ware.

There has been so much confusion in the matter of hall-marks on pewter—that is, as to marking of pewter plate by the Company *officially*—that the difference in significance between marks impressed by the *makers* of any plate, be it of gold, silver or baser metals, and those struck by *legal authorities* should be recognised at the outset.

The maker's mark on all plate, as has been explained in the case of pewterers, was compulsory and was the voucher of the maker for his ware; but this was only a personal one and as such might or might not, depending on the honesty of the individual and the strictness of the interested company in the exercise of its right of examination, indicate standard quality and workmanship. On the other hand, marks if struck at a hall—whether hall-marks on gold and silver plate struck by the Goldsmiths' Company or hall-marks on pewter struck by the Pewterers' Com-

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pany—would signify beyond doubt *official* approval of the ware by the company so marking it, an authoritative voucher of the utmost importance.

It does not, however, seem to have been the general practice of the Pewterers' Company to have officially marked pewter ware, and it therefore, must have depended upon the maker's touch as a tolerably sure indication that wares were of proper metal and workmanship, and in any case on its right of search, assay, and confiscation. There are specific references in the Company's records to official marks and marking, but these are exceptional and for special cases.

The earliest record relating to the use of marks by the Company in *official* capacity is of the year 1475, and refers to the mark of the "Broad Arrow" to be placed on confiscated ware. As such ware was melted at the hall, it is not probable that any so marked now exists.

A record of 1509 refers to a marking-iron, also for official use, and during that century the official marking of pewter lids of stone pots seems to have been undertaken in a desultory manner. The first specific use of the term hall-mark in



PLATE XIX—JUG OR FLAGON

Probably French: early eighteenth century. Height, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches; greatest diameter, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Marks: inside the cover, Rose, with IVM above.

A favorite and pleasing form of vessel; the design with slight variations was constantly employed by the pewterers of Holland, Belgium, France, and England.

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the Company's records occurs in the year 1552, although certainly the marks just referred to were such. The expression "Mark of the Hall" is again used in a record of 1580, referring to which Mr. Welch states: ". . . bringing goods to the hall to be marked was contrary to the usual practice." Again, in 1688, it was ordered that wine measures of the usual form should be kept at the hall and "marked with the hall-mark."

The foregoing examples of official marking of pewter by the Company are of antiquarian interest rather than of practical importance, save that they but emphasise the fact that the custom was not a general or comprehensive one, and that the collector must acknowledge that the small marks found on pewter, while resembling hall-marks found on gold and silver plate, are in reality *marks struck by the makers of the ware* and not by the Company or authorised officials. While, therefore, they are in no legal sense hall-marks, it is perhaps simpler to continue to so designate them, as it is a matter of some tradition.

The practice among makers of pewter of striking these marks, which resemble official hall-

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marks of the Goldsmiths' Company as found on gold and silver plate, was a very general one, and, while little or no information concerning it is given by the Company's records, it is not, on review of the situation, inexplicable. From time almost immemorial purchasers of gold and silver plate, depended on certain marks set thereon as an official guarantee of standard purity of metal, for in earliest times, the Goldsmiths' Company of London, and later certain provincial assay offices, employed a distinct mark to certify officially to the standard metal of all such plate. Such marks, necessary alike to satisfy the purchaser and protect the maker, were strictly imposed by legislation which from time to time regulated the trade of the goldsmith. As the public came, therefore, to depend upon certain well-known marks to designate standard quality of gold and silver plate, it is not at all unlikely that pewter plate was found to sell more readily if bearing a mark or marks upon which the public had learned to depend as indicating a standard purity of gold and silver, and in a general way very likely believed to indicate a standard for any metal.

With regard to marks on gold and silver plate,

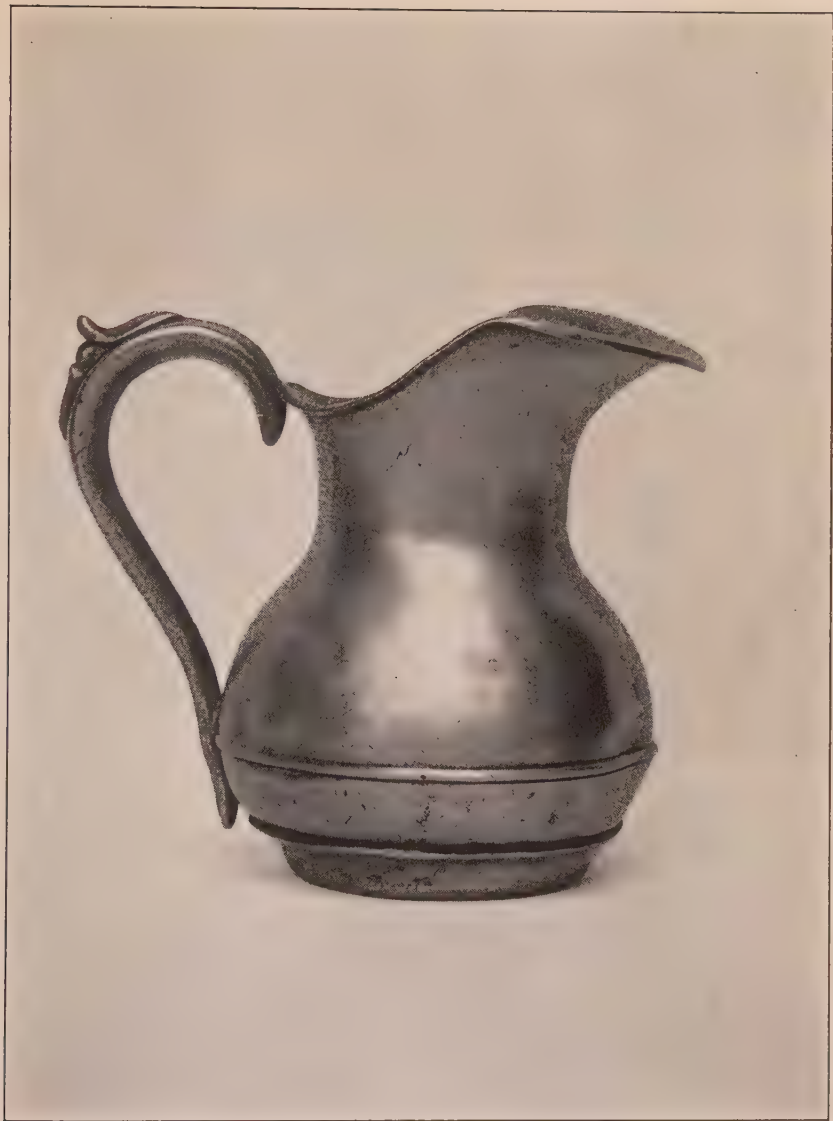


PLATE XX—JUG

Probably English: early eighteenth century. Height, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter at centre, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Marks: on bottom, X, within a block crown, with pellets in the angles.

The boldness of the design is unusual for so small a vessel. (Reproduced at about three-quarters actual size.)

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Mr. Buck states: "All plate stamped in London thus has the following marks:

The Leopard's Head
The Maker's Mark
The Annual Letter
The Lion Passant
and from 1697 until 1720
The Lion's Head erased,
and Britannia

instead of the leopard's head and lion passant, and in addition the duty mark of the Sovereign's head from 1784 to 1890." Also, "Since the year 1700-1 the marks on provincial plate have been the same as on London plate, with the addition of the arms of the provincial towns." ¹

From the foregoing marks, obligatory, as indicated, on gold and silver plate, the pewterers practically copied most of their hall-marks, so-called, using in general a combination of four, struck with separate punches side by side, or with a pair of two marks each, and the leopard's head, the lion passant or rampant, and the figure of Britannia are found, time and time again, as hall-marks on pewter plate in conjunction with either the maker's initials or some personal symbol. Devices representing date letters are also

¹ "Old Plate," by John H. Buck, New York, 1902.

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frequent but of course without meaning. Even the marks of the provincial assay officer for gold and silver were used by the pewterers, but when these were the arms of the town wherein the pewterer resided it was with better reason. The arms of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a shield bearing three castles, two above and one below, may be noticed frequently as one of four hall-marks on pewter. Variation of the Exeter goldsmiths' mark is exceedingly common, it being the letter X enclosed in a circle with or without pellets in the angles. The York mark of a seeded rose crowned or otherwise, conjoined with a fleur-de-lis within a circle is also found although less frequently.

It is but natural that the Goldsmiths' Company should have objected to this practice of imitating its official marks by the makers of pewter, but apparently no vigorous steps were taken to prohibit it until, in 1635, it occasioned an order from the court of the London aldermen to the effect that pewterers should stamp their pewter with one stamp "as anciently hath been accustomed." This regulation may have interrupted the practice; if so, it could have been but for a short time, as the pewter of that and subsequent years testifies.



PLATE XXI—PEPPER POT

English: probably early eighteenth century. Actual size.

Marks: none.

An example of the best type, showing the amount of style that can be concentrated within a small area, yet with an entire absence of complexity. The precise type is rare; those of less well developed form are fairly common and are reproduced to-day.

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It is curious that the Pewterers' Company itself did not object to this practice of its members striking the mark "proper to the goldsmiths," but the Company seems to have concerned itself but little regarding indiscriminate use of the so-called hall-marks provided the pewterer's touch was also on the ware.

It is evident while hall-marks, if identified with similar ones on admittedly good ware, may somewhat assist the collector of pewter, that the maker's touch is the predominant means of identification and of vastly more importance. It is not infrequent to find initials in a hall-mark differing from the initials, or from those of the name, in the maker's touch, as it was an accepted custom to strike the initials of the dealer, if other than the maker, in the smaller mark.

Various other hall-marks commonly found on pewter are as follows:

Rose (crowned or otherwise)	A bird	A horse-shoe
Griffin's head	Dog courant	A crown
Stag's head	A lamb	A buckle
Horse's head	A cock	An anchor
Figure of peace	Catharine wheel	Cinque foil
	The golden fleece	Heart and crown

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On standard measures the official stamp of the government inspector should be, and usually is, found if the measure has been in use. These marks consist generally of initials designating the reigning sovereign, such as G. R., V. R., etc., with the crown above, such marks frequently being followed by the date, or a number of dates, showing successive official examinations but not necessarily indicative of the age of the vessel.

The isolated letters or initials frequently found punched on pewter ware should not be confounded with hall-marks or with the maker's touch, they being merely initials either of dealer or purchaser struck usually, but not necessarily, by the maker.

It is especially regrettable that the Pewterers' Company did not follow the excellent custom of the Goldsmiths' Company and impress upon ware of its craftsmen a specific letter denoting the year of its manufacture or assay. Such annual letters have been officially struck on gold and silver plate by the wardens of the Goldsmiths' Company, or by official assayers, almost, if not quite, without interruption from 1438. If collectors of pewter had been given some such marks by which to determine the date of pewter plate,



PLATE XXII—MEASURE

English: late eighteenth century type. Height, 7 inches; diameter, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Marks: on the margin, X.

One of a set. A standard measure of simple form agreeably modelled. The sweep of the handle is especially good, but the supporting "filler" regrettable, although common to the period.

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their work would be considerably less and the results more satisfying.¹

SUMMARY OF THE FOREGOING TEXT ON MARKS FOUND ON PEWTER PLATE

Marks Struck by Makers:

Maker's touch; compulsory	from 1503
(Allowed to be either large or small) . .	after 1747
The letter X, crowned or otherwise, upon extraordinary ware	from 1503
Touch of the rose and crown; by permission	from 1564
London; regulations varied, but usual for London makers	after 1670
Maker's name at length; regulations varied, but usual	after 1697
Hall-marks (usually four in number); from early in the sixteenth century to 1635, when it was forbidden. (The practice was not, however, discontinued.)	

¹ For identification of touches found on old pewter plate of English origin, collectors should refer to Massé's "Pewter Plate." In Appendix A the author describes the touches found on the five touch-plates at Pewterers' Hall, London, and an index to these names is also given. Another appendix contains a list of miscellaneous marks from various sources with descriptions of the same. There is also given a list of names of makers of pewter (Freemen of the Company), many of whom are not represented on the touch-plates.

Photographic reproductions of the five touch-plates existing may be found in Welch's "History of the Pewterers' Company."

Collectors should not too hastily conclude, however, that all touches on English pewter are to be found in the lists above mentioned. Where identification is possible the aid derived in dating ware is of course considerable.

In Wood's "Scottish Pewter Ware and Pewterers" a list of various marks and touches to be found upon Scottish pewter ware is given in Appendix A, and following is a list of freemen pewterers and apprentices and a list of Scottish pewter pieces in the principal museums of Scotland.

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Marks Officially Struck:

Stamp of government on standard measures. (Most frequently initials of reigning sovereign, followed, though not always, by date, or number of district or inspector.)

Marks Struck by the Pewterers' Company, Officially:

None of present-day import to the collector; the records of the Company refer to:

Mark of "Broad Arrow"; denoting confiscation .	1475
Mark of "Lily pot and strake"; denoting quality	1509
Mark of "Fleur-de-lis"; for pewter lids of stone pots	1548
"Mark of the Hall"; for pewter lids of stone pots .	1552
"Mark of the Hall"; for specified ware of limited class	1580
"Hall-marks"; for standard wine measures kept at the Hall	1688

CHAPTER V

AMERICAN PEWTER PLATE

IN America pewter was commonly used from about 1650 to 1780 for domestic purposes, to an extent perhaps even greater than in England, for few even of the wealthier people could afford silver plate, except for special articles and exceptional occasions, and the various wares superseding pewter were naturally adopted somewhat later and more slowly here than in Europe.

Mr. Massé, referring to its use in this country, says: "Pewter played an important part in the first colonial households in America, as it was the only available ware in many cases. Boston was the chief seat both of its manufacture and also of the distribution of English pewter."

While the pewterers of Boston may not on the whole have outnumbered those of other towns, it seems probable that they made, at least during colonial times, a large proportion of the ware used north of New York; and although these two

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places were the chief points of distribution of the English product, the manufacture of the home ware was not by any means confined to them.

The manufacture of pewter in America practically ceased in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, although certainly examples may be found dating from 1825 to 1840. Commercially it was displaced, as in other countries, by earthenware and by various metals of qualities which permitted greater ease and economy in working and which supplanted pewter in the kitchen, as porcelain and silver electro-plated on baser metals supplanted the pewter service of the master's table.

A great deal of English pewter plate was sent to this country, much of it of excellent quality, and it is not at all unlikely that many moulds, from which colonial ware was made, were, in the early days at least, of English origin.

That some of the English pewter sent to this country was not of proper quality, however, as well as that Boston and New York were not the only points of distribution of the imported ware, is shown by the following extract from the records of the Pewterers' Company, London, 1726-7: "The Substance of a Letter written from Phila-



PLATE XXIII—URN

American; nineteenth century. Height, 17 inches.

Marks: on bottom, R. GLEASON, in small rectangle.

The spout is of brass; the mounts as well as the body are characteristic of the models of the late eighteenth century. The workmanship is excellent; metal fair.

AMERICAN PEWTER PLATE

delphia dated 12th of Decemb^r last was read (23rd March), complaining of Ware made of bad work sent from Bristoll. Referred to a Committee to examine and report.”¹

The Pewterers' Company appears to have been reluctant at this time to exert its rights so far from home, and probably feared failure or humiliation in the attempt, as records of a later date show that no decisive action was taken in the matter.

The methods of makers in America were closely allied to those, already described, of the English, and if the alloy averaged less fine than would have been used for corresponding utensils in England the workmanship of the American makers up to 1780 was almost upon a par with the best traditions of the craft.

These early makers in general followed the custom established by the English in 1503 and marked their ware with a touch consisting of various devices, and usually, but not always, with the name struck in full within or beside the device. While they established no such association as dominated the craft in England, and were bound by no such comprehensive rules and regulations, it was natural enough that they should,

¹ “History of the Pewterers' Company,” vol. II, p. 186, Welch.

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in a consistent, traditional way, and as a matter of some pride, impress their touch upon their ware and to this, especially during the earlier days, add the conventional hall-marks so called.

The early touches show that the art of die-cutting was well upheld by the colonial craftsman, and the eagle is successfully essayed in all postures, the lettering is uniformly good, and the device of simple and dignified rendering. On much of the later pewter, however, the touch is more crude in character, and it finally deteriorated to mere commercial form, the name only, in many cases, being impressed upon the ware.

Mr. Bell, writing of the English ware, seems to find much of it unmarked, and of the ware marked only a very small proportion capable of being identified with the touches recorded at Pewterers' Hall, London, and a not much larger proportion capable of being traced by its marks to the makers recorded in the list of Freeman at the same hall.

Of the English ware found in this country, however, it has been the writer's experience that a very large proportion bears either the touch of the maker or hall-marks supposedly personal to him, or both, and while in the selection of pewter



PLATE XXIV—JUG

American: nineteenth century. Height, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter at centre, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
Marks: on bottom, DUNHAM, in plain rectangle.

A refined example of a once popular American type, many of the specimens of which are, however, crude and without qualities justifying their presence in well considered collections. Metal and workmanship excellent.

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no regard whatever has been paid to the marks, they have, of course, where existing, aided materially in dating the ware with more or less certainty. It is possible that English marks were counterfeited in this country, but it is very unlikely that such was the case, until in recent years, with the deliberate intent of deceit, and the ware referred to bears the inimitable characteristics, not of form and quality—for these can be duplicated, although they seldom are successfully—but of age.

— The design of pewter plate of American origin is often of the best character, and the early specimens especially denote a keen comprehension of the possible development of pewter forms and equally a recognition of the limit of elaboration which the material imposed. This is perhaps especially observable in the varied types of candlesticks of the period and, with some reservations, in those of the oil lamps which were pre-eminently an American product. As long as the makers adhered to styles fitted to the material employed the design was uniformly good, but with any attempt to compete with the silversmith's decorative work or the ornate forms of various other wares it failed completely.

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In selecting American pewter it seems advisable to avoid such plates as show no signs of having been hammered, and in much of the late ware it is only too evident that this process was entirely omitted, none of the multiple resultant facets showing on the back of the curve, severe concentric lines of the turning being more often than not the only marks in evidence. Consideration of style and trial of quality of alloy are of course essential. Considerable variation in the form of American plates and dishes is found in the ware after about 1780, and while those that have a few simple mouldings on the rim are oftentimes exceedingly attractive, a marked departure from standard forms seldom resulted in a benefit, and more often than not such dishes failed through superfluous complications of the rim members.

The body of such hollow vessels as were usually cast in two parts should be examined on the inside, and if no trace whatever exists of the line of joining it may be concluded, other conditions not opposing, that the article was spun, not cast, and as the product of such a process to be treated accordingly, assuming that principles of collectors may differ.



PLATE XXV—LAMP

American: nineteenth century. Height over all, 11 inches; diameter of base, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
Marks: on bottom, R. GLEASON, in plain rectangle.

One of a pair. A delightful example of skillful modelling, well conceived and executed. Metal resonant; workmanship good.

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Teapots light of weight and lacking the characteristics of true pewter ware are undoubtedly admitted to most collections, but the amateur is advised to go slowly as regards these, and whether or not in doubt of the alloy to guard against accepting those obviously gaunt specimens wholly lacking in style and equally those of meretricious decoration or ostentatious form. Whatever the alloy and the form it usually will be found that the poorer specimens have japanned hard metal handles, although it is not conversely true that all with wooden handles are good or even better; but this frequently is the case. Whether of metal or wood, the handles and cover knobs are usually painted or japanned black, but the most casual examination will be sufficient to determine what the material really is.

Tankards and flagons should show the characteristics already perhaps too much insisted upon; those of inferior or late make will usually be found to end at the top without the additional thickening of the rim, and if spun will usually have the bottom set up from the lower edge of the body, this being secured by a ring inserted below, the joint being invisible and the whole body seemingly, but not in reality, cast. This,

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however, does not apply to ware intentionally made to deceive, for in such many of the characteristics of the old ware are retained, and the spurious article therefore has to be considered in a more comprehensive manner.

American communion services are eagerly sought by many collectors, but there are few that unequivocally could be classed as pewter, in the limited sense usually accepted, and as well illustrated by the alloy of most of the other specimens admitted to collections of which these services frequently comprise a part. A very large percentage, indeed, of these services date later than 1780 and in reality are of Britannia metal ware, and, curiously enough, seldom display either the virility or the refinement characteristic of the commoner articles of pewter or even the graceful lines found in much of the Britannia metal ware as manufactured in the early days by the Sheffield makers. Weight, color, and texture are all indicative of the use of a modern alloy and the forms seldom reflect credit to the makers' imagination. Either a sterility or a confusion of ideas is apparent, curves die away into other curves without relief of intervening sharp mouldings or incised lines, and a fine rela-

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tion of minor parts to the whole is generally lacking.

The importation from abroad of various wares of alloy which contained no lead as well as of the various Staffordshire earthenwares, and the greater ease of spinning lighter alloys and the consequent saving of labour, very visibly affected the pewterers' trade after 1800, and every evidence on the makers' part to economise in material and workmanship is disclosed in much of the ware of the immediate preceding, and in most of that of the succeeding, periods.

Style deteriorated as the alloy and workmanship successively fell below traditional standards, the once robust forms became more and more attenuated, while grace and refinement were lost in a forlorn struggle to maintain actual existence. Tankards grew woefully thin; handles dwindled almost to a thread, unless, indeed, they became a swollen and hollow sham; covers scarcely fell of their own weight; over the face of all spread a sickly tone of expiring life, and the pewterer himself could hardly say whether these were true brethren to the old ware—although weaklings—or whether, indeed, they were of mixed blood, so confused became the parentage of al-

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loy. Pewter of the later type merged into good Britannia metal and that quickly into inordinately inferior combinations; nickel and German-silver created further havoc along the outskirts of the opposing elements without openly mixing as factors in the main issue; the white metal of James Vickers, of Sheffield, possibly started the fray, and if so with an excellent beginning, but it was forced to devious downward courses—passing electro-plate on the edge of an abyss of early Victorian depths in which, unfortunately, the latter never expired—and emerged only after various internal revolutions and stages of pitiful emaciation, portentous and triumphant in the decorated German wares of the twentieth century.

With regard to pewter made in America there now exists among dealers an unfortunate and erroneous impression as to its special value, caused probably by the wholly irrelevant conditions pertaining to the prices paid for early examples of colonial silver. American pewter is, on the whole, of less value than that of England, its range in variety of form is far from equalling that of many other countries, and alloy and workmanship certainly are not superior. Patriotism and simulated ideals can scarcely enter into

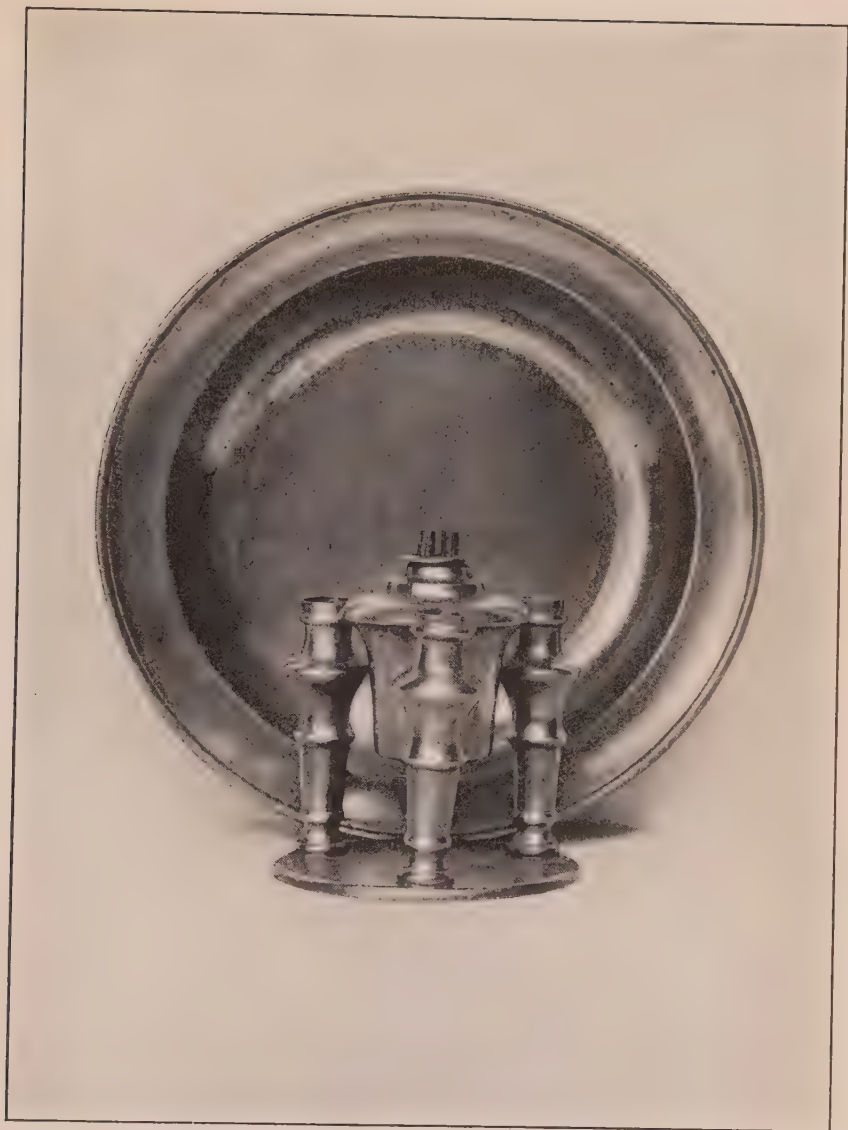


PLATE XXVI—AMERICAN PEWTER: NINETEENTH CENTURY

Plate: diameter, 11 inches.

Marks: on bottom, Maker's touch, stamped twice with X between, an eagle with THOMAS D. above and BOARDMAN below.

The alloy is resonant and better than that frequently used by this maker.

Lamp: height, 5 inches; diameter of base, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Marks: none.

A curious example of lamp and taper holder combined. Alloy and workmanship inferior.

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the subject; no one was pre-eminent among our pewterers. One would think that the difference in the two cases would be significant. The early silver plate was made by men of greater or less reputation, and individuality is frequently an attribute of their work. It was almost invariably marked, and marked pieces by really able, or later popularised, makers may be expected to command higher prices, although even in regard to these the reasonable limit appears to have been exceeded.

As has before been remarked, pewter is not a product of rare skill of individual men, save in one or two instances in connection with decorative ware, so called, and these of little or no importance as far as the principle is concerned. No one maker predominated in recognised artistic skill over another, and the ware almost universally was of a certain defined type, the product of many makers during the best period coming frequently from like moulds. It may become an especial hobby to collect American pewter and thus inflate its price beyond that of similar specimens of other origin, but as yet the predilection of collectors does not seem to warrant that condition. In any case such specialised collections

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would fail of the broader intent advocated in these pages for the consideration of the amateur.

The following list of American pewterers, while the most comprehensive obtainable for present use, is by no means complete, and represents probably but a small proportion of those who actually were masters in the trade between 1650 and 1825. As no prominent organisation of pewterers was formed in this country, and as no one place dominated all others, as did London in England, as the seat of power for the formulation of laws governing or stimulating the craft, there is at hand no official information regarding the trade, nor are records of the names of pewterers of the various towns to be found in comprehensive form. It is no easy matter, therefore, to bring together anything like a complete schedule of the names of those who plied the trade in this country.

Several circumstances complicate the desired accuracy of such a list in any case. It is a recognised fact that many of the American pewterers after 1790, and probably most who continued to work after 1825, applied themselves to the manufacture of Britannia metal ware, so



PLATE XXVII—LAMP

American: nineteenth century. Height, $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches; diameter of base, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
Marks: on bottom, R. GLEASON, in plain rectangle.

One of a pair, with conventional lemon top (so called) and prettily modelled plain shaft; metal and workmanship good.

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that one frequently finds not only the same name stamped on pewter ware and on articles undeniably of the succeeding alloy, but in numerous instances the identical mark on pewter of splendid quality and Britannia metal ware of the most inferior character. While accepting such names as these as makers of pewter plate, a certain precaution should be used and all ware bearing them should be examined as to alloy and not blindly accepted because marked with a name identified as that of a pewterer.

Again, many names have been found on Britannia metal ware of such design as to suggest the probability that the makers had previously been pewterers, and the failure to find any pieces of pewter bearing the same name is no proof that they do not exist. The writer, however, has naturally been constrained under such circumstances to omit these names from the list here given.

An irritating condition that precludes accuracy, both of dating and locating the pewterer, is the omission from much of the pewter ware of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century of the stamp designating the town of the maker, and it is one which infinitely complicates intel-

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ligent search for reference to the name in early documents.

A contributory cause of confusion was the custom, apparently not isolated, of an individual using as his mark or touch a device within which, variously, the name or initials were used or altogether omitted, the stamp otherwise being identical, so that for the same maker one often-times finds three different renderings of the same touch.

In many cases the makers used a large or small stamp, as demanded by the size of the ware. This, however, was traditional and is in no way confusing.

Where pewter is found bearing simply the name of a maker, without any device or secondary stamp of residence, it obviously is dangerous to conclude that the pewterer was an American, unless so proved by documentary reference or otherwise. Yet, occasionally, examples come to hand of a type so ostensibly Colonial that it seems unwise not to acknowledge them as American products, even if no farther information be obtainable as to the name. Such attribution is far less dangerous, although wholly undesirable, than the thoughtless conclusion that the article

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PLATE XXVIII—CANDLESTICK

American: nineteenth century. Height, 6 inches; diameter, 4 inches.

Marks: R. DUNHAM, in plain rectangle.

One of a pair. An example of plain short candlestick with skilfully modelled shaft and good base. The alloy is hard and the workmanship good.

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is pewter, for nine times out of ten American ware so marked will be found to be of Britannia metal.

It should, however, be recognised that many nineteenth century makers of Britannia metal and of block-tin ware, so called, while naturally preferring to be known as manufacturers of the most modern ware of their day, and while advertising as "composition workers" or "block-tin workers," etc., produced nevertheless, from time to time, articles of the old alloy, so that occasionally pewter is found bearing a name which upon investigation is found to be that of one who is referred to solely as a manufacturer of "silver-plated ware," or "Britannia metal ware," or as a "block-tin worker," or a "composition worker." In such cases knowledge of the ware is essential, for it is only a little less foolish to discard pewter, because it bears the name of a "composition worker," than it is to accept Britannia metal ware, because stamped with a name identified as that of a pewterer.

In general, collectors will find American pewter yet obtainable of so late a period that the maker's name will appear more often than not in plain form without any enriching and distinctive device.

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This, however, is subject to the usual exceptions, for several makers as late as 1824 used touches of the old and standard form.

In the following list the dates opposite the makers indicate the earliest reference found in connection with them as active manufacturers, and while it is quite possible that many produced the ware at an earlier period than the time assigned to them, it is evident, on the supposition that some at least continued to work at their trade for the major part of their lives, that pewter marked with names similar to those here noted may well be of a date later than that given on the list.

It will be noticed that there is an interim of nearly a hundred years between the few pewterers listed in the seventeenth century and those next succeeding. This is due to present inadequate information, and is not to be construed as representing an actual condition of Colonial times.

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AUSTIN, RICHARD; pewterer. Boston, 16 Marlborough
Street 1796

From Boston Directory of 1796.

(Franklin St. in 1810.)

Note.—There was a Richard Austin, Master of
the Pewterers' Company, London, in 1659.

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- BADGER, THOMAS; pewterer. Boston, Prince Street . . 1789
 From specimens of pewter plate.
 Mark: Device with an eagle; above, Thomas;
 below, Badger.
 Also separate stamp, Boston, in rectangle with
 scroll design.
 In Boston Directory, 1789-1810.
- BASSETT, FRANCIS; pewterer. New York, 218 Queen
 Street 1786
 From New York Directory of 1786.
- BASSETT, FREDERICK; pewterer. New York, 23 Queen
 Street 1792
 From New York Directory of 1792.
- BIRD, JAMES; pewterer. New York, 75 Harmer Street . 1820
 From New York Directory of 1820.
- BOARDMAN & Co., Timo.; pewterers. New York, 173
 Water Street 1824
 From New York Directory of 1824.
- BOARDMAN & HART; pewterers. New York, 178 Water
 Street 1828
 From New York Directory of 1828.
- BOARDMAN, THOS. D.; Hartford, Conn. Probably after 1825
 From specimen of pewter plate.
 Mark: Device with eagle and maker's name.
 On small ware an eagle with T. D. B. below.
 Also separate stamp, Hartford, in plain rectangle.
 The ware is frequently of an inferior quality.
 The Hartford Directory of 1854 gives the suc-
 ceeding firm as "Boardman, T. D. & S.
 britannia man'f'y., 274 Main Street."
Note.—There was a Thomas Boardman, pew-
 terer, London, a Freeman in 1746.

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- BUMSTEED, THOMAS; pewterer. Boston 1654
 From Suffolk Deeds, Vol. II, 135, and Vol. III,
 213.
- CALDER, WILLIAM; pewterer. Providence, R. I., 166
 North Main Street 1824
 From specimen of pewter plate.
 Mark: Circular device with eagle and, above,
 Calder; below, Provid.
 Also, Calder-Providence, in small rectangle on
 small ware.
 In Providence Directory of 1824.
- CLARKE, THOMAS; pewterer. Boston 1683
 From Suffolk Deeds, Vol. XIII, 44-396.
- COLDWELL, GEORGE; pewterer. New York, 23 Gold Street 1792
 From New York Directory of 1792.
- COMER, JOHN; pewterer. Boston 1678
 From Suffolk Deeds, Vol. XI, 40, and Vol. XIV,
 373.
- DANFORTH, SAMUEL. Hartford, Conn. Probably early
 nineteenth century.
 From specimen of pewter plate.
 Mark: Device with an eagle and maker's name.
 Also, Hartford, in plain rectangle.
 Hall-marks: 1, S.D.; 2, eagle; 3, star (eight
 points) each in oval.
- DUNHAM, R. Boston (?) Probably after 1825
 From specimens of pewter plate of essentially
 American type.
- ELSWORTH, WM. I.; pewterer. New York, 1 Courtland
 Street 1792
 From New York Directory of 1792.



PLATE XXIX—CANDLESTICK

American : nineteenth century. Height, $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; diameter, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Marks: F. PORTER—No. 1—WESTBROOK, within a circle.

One of a pair. A familiar type of plain Colonial candlestick. Alloy and workmanship fair.

AMERICAN PEWTER PLATE

- FIELDS, PHILIP; pewterer. New York, 16 Bowery-Lane . . . 1799
 From New York Directory of 1799.
- GLEASON, ROSWELL. Dorchester, Mass. 1830
 From examples of pewter plate; also on Britan-
 nia metal ware.
 Mark: R. Gleason, on small ware; Roswell
 Gleason, on large ware.
- GREEN, ANDREW; pewterer. Boston, Temple Street . . . 1789
 From Boston Directory of 1789-1798.
- GREEN, SAMUEL; pewterer. Boston, Milk Street . . . 1798
 From Boston Directory of 1798-1810.
 (Marlborough Place in 1825.)
- GREEN, THOMAS; pewterer. Boston, Dock Square . . . 1789
 From Boston Directory of 1789.
- HAMLIN, SAMUEL E. Providence, R. I., 109 North Main
 Street 1824
 From specimens of pewter plate.
 Mark: Circular device with eagle standing,
 with anchor in oval under one wing; above,
 Hamlin; below, Providence.
 In Providence Directory of 1824.
- HART, LUCIUS; pewterer. New York, 178 Water Street . . 1828
 From specimen of pewter plate, also on Britan-
 nia metal ware.
 Mark: Plain:—Hart—N. York.
 In New York Directory of 1828.
- HERO, CHARLOTTE, widow; pewterer. Philadelphia, 230
 No. Second Street 1796
 From Philadelphia Directory of 1796.
- KIRKBY, WILLIAM; pewterer. New York, 23 Dock Street . . 1786
 From New York Directory of 1786.

PEWTER

- LAFETRA & ALLAIRE; pewterers. New York, 277 Water
Street 1815
From New York Directory of 1815.
- LOCK(E?), D. New York. Probably after 1825
From specimen of pewter plate, also on Britan-
nia metal ware.
Mark: D. Lock, New York, in small rectangle.
- M'EWEN & SON, MALCOM; pewterers. New York, Water
Street and Beekman-slip 1794
From New York Directory of 1794.
- MICHEL, ANDRÉ; pewterer. New York, 255 Broadway . 1796
From New York Directory of 1796.
- PEARSE, ROBERT; pewterer. New York, 13 Chatham Street 1792
From New York Directory of 1792.
- PORTER, F. Conn. (?) Probably after 1825
From specimen of pewter plate.
Mark: F. Porter, Westbrook, No. 1.
Also made Britannia metal ware.
- RICHARDSON, GEORGE; pewterer. Boston, 4 Oliver Place 1825
From Boston Directory of 1825.
- RICHARDSON, G. Cranston, R. I. Probably early nine-
teenth century.
From specimen of pewter plate.
Mark: Circular device with eagle, maker's
name, and Cranston, R. I.
- SHRIMPTON, HENRY; "brasier." Boston 1665
From Suffolk Deeds, Vol. V, 15-30.
Whether a maker or a dealer is uncertain; his
will of 1665 refers to several thousand
pounds of pewter ware and "tools for pew-
ter and brasse."



PLATE XXX—CANDLESTICK

American : nineteenth century. Height, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
Marks : none.


Design, metal, and workmanship good.

AMERICAN PEWTER PLATE

- SKINNER, JOHN; pewterer. Boston, Newbury Street . . 1789
From Boston Directory of 1789.
- TRASK, JOHN. Boston 1825
From specimens of pewter plate.
Same mark also on inferior examples of Britannia metal ware.
Mark: I. Trask. In plain rectangle.
Advertises as "Composition worker," 1 Richmond Street, in the Boston Directory of 1825.
- WELCH, JOHN; "pewter ware." Boston, Union Street . . 1796
From Boston Directory of 1796.
Note.—Probably a dealer, not a maker, as he advertises "hardware" in 1800.
- WILDES, THOMAS; pewterer. New York, 22 Roosevelt Street 1832
From New York Directory of 1832.
- WILL, HENRY; pewterer. New York, 3 Water Street . . 1786
From New York Directory of 1786.
- WILL, WILLIAM; pewterer. Philadelphia, 66 No. Second Street 1796
From Philadelphia Directory of 1796.
- YOULE & Co., THOS.; pewterers. New York, 342 Water Street 1811
From New York Directory of 1811.
- YOULE, G.; pewterer. New York, 298 Water Street . . 1798
From New York Directory of 1798.
- YOULE, THOS.; pewterer. New York, 334 Water Street . 1815
From New York Directory of 1815.
- YOULE, widow (of Thos.); pewterer. New York, 334 Water Street 1820
From New York Directory of 1820.

CHAPTER VI

MODERN PEWTER AND VARIOUS WARES OF THE XVIII AND XIX CENTURIES

 EITHER the making of pewter as an alloy nor the manufacture of the ware is a lost art, but its demand for general utilitarian purposes and the expert craftsmanship have passed, so that from a collector's point of view at least it is an art lost.

Modern demands would probably in any case prohibit the old methods of manufacture, prevailing conditions certainly preclude in the workmen of our factories, and usually in those of our shops, the desire that once was, and ever should be, paramount—that is, perfection; but perfection means all that is opposite to quantity and to cheapness, and before these two vital necessities the ideals—if there were such, in any case the customs—of the sixteenth century fade in little matters of art as well as in great.

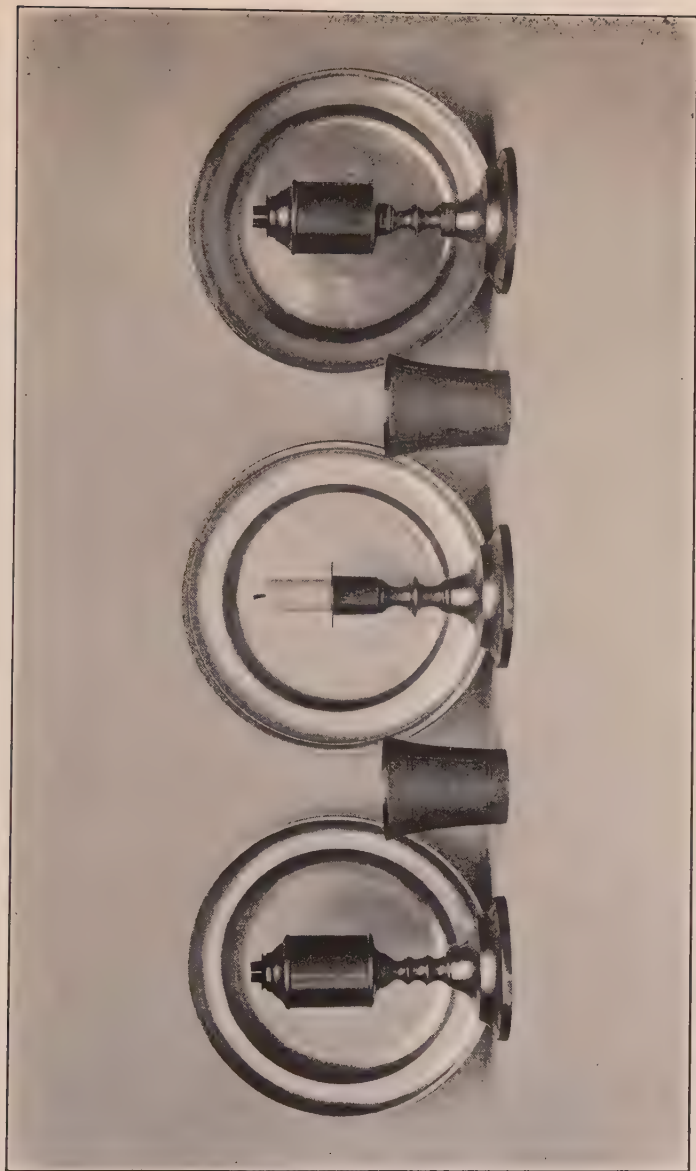


PLATE XXXI—GROUP OF AMERICAN PEWTER

- Plates: eighteenth century. Diameters, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches and $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
- Lamps: nineteenth century. Height, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
- Marks: on bottom, THOMAS BADGER, within device, with an eagle; separate stamp, BOSTON.
- Marks: R. GLEASON.
- Metal and workmanship good.
- Cups: probably late eighteenth century. Height, 3 inches.
- Marks: none.

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It is, perhaps, needless to point out the important factor that neither education in the specific trade, or work at it, is any longer the duty or the desire of successive generations.

Pewter ware is still made with honest intent, but the product is mechanical and of a very limited class, and not such as ever will be sought by collectors of succeeding years.

It is possible, on the other hand, that the pewter made to-day in imitation of the old forms will menace future generations, especially that made from the old moulds with the makers' marks counterfeited; such utensils given time would very probably succeed in deceiving any but the trained eye, but it is not likely that the output will long be found remunerative, and in that case its manufacture will scarcely be continued, in any large scale, on the uncommercial basis of biding its time.

An examination of this modern ware, made with the intent to deceive, often reveals cunning workmanship in parts purposely broken and mended, in rents at edges, and battered forms and partially obliterated makers' marks, but the old spirit is lacking—handles and decorative parts are often thin, and, if not badly cast, are

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poorly finished; quality of alloy and colour especially fail to equal the inherent characteristics of the old ware, as generally, although not of necessity, do also style and proportion. The surface, moreover, of such utensils, whether battered or not, fails to reveal the minute and multifarious evidences of years of life and use which proclaim the genuine article and add texture to the original surface of the alloy.

It is probable that more porringers were made between 1900 and 1905 than in the preceding one hundred and fifty years, and jugs, flagons, and, more latterly, plates, pepper-pots and spoons are all on the market, and these may be found not only for sale by dealers, but well distributed in households far distant from any railway. The Colonial sperm oil lamp is perhaps the best of all the American reproductions and therefore the most to be regretted.

The foregoing remarks do not refer or apply to the *present-day* manufacture of articles of Britannia metal, for, aside from the fact that there is little attempt made to reproduce the forms of old pewter, there is no effort evinced to deceive in the alloy or the finish; the articles are new and the desire is that they should so appear,

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and, notwithstanding the fact that the name pewter is generally used in connection with this ware, it is with no intent to falsify.

A slight decrease in the output of modern pewter, made in imitation of the old, has been observable in the last year or so, and this, curiously enough, may be attributed to some extent to the metal workers' extreme energy in flooding the market with spurious Sheffield plate. This phase of industry has caused not a little sadness and some merriment on the part of collectors who understand the old process of rolling silver on copper, but it has resulted, doubtless, in a profit to the dealers far beyond anything ever realised by them in selling modern pewter, which commands relatively but a small price for the individual piece and one that represents the actual cost of making much more nearly than is the case with the prices obtained for the electro silver-plated articles in question when sold for Sheffield plate of the eighteenth century.

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As reference has been made in several parts of this work to Britannia metal ware, and with deprecatory inference, it is only fair to the early makers of this or closely allied alloys, as well as

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to amateur collectors, to state that there is no reason why eighteenth-century ware made of it should not be acquired if it is bought and exhibited for what it is, which seldom enough is the case, and if discretion is used as to the period and type of the specimens obtained.

Whether a ware so closely resembling pewter and yet undeniably differing from it should be admitted to the pewter collection, however, is quite another matter, and one which the amateur to-day can decide perhaps to better advantage than did his predecessors.

Objection to the ware has not been based wholly on the material of which it is made; for while this is harder and colder than pewter and without the inherent charm of the latter, it is, nevertheless—referring only to the early type—a material of some virile qualities. The objection, therefore, beyond the fact that the material is less pleasing relatively than pewter, lies in the manner in which it was developed. It came into existence during a period of excellent design, but close to the end, nevertheless, of that period and only a little before an epoch that reflects the worst art from which England has suffered since mediæval times. These periods are well repre-

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PLATE XXXIII—TEAPOT

Probably American: nineteenth century. Height, 8 inches.

Marks: none.

The handle sockets and spout are well modelled. The acorn top is silver, the handle wood. The pot consists of four separate parts including two strainers. Metal heavy and fairly hard but non-resonant.

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sented in contemporary work of the silversmiths, whose designs, if not copied by workers of Britannia metal, were often closely adapted by them for use in their own wares.

This would be well enough, although of doubtful expediency, if the Britannia metal ware of 1770 to 1790 predominated in quantity over that of later times; but the early ware is a very small part of the whole, and it is nearly always the later type that is found for sale, this being either of florid character and unfitted to the material used, or of a nature almost the reverse—crude in design, large and coarse of form, and of a plainness which amounts to ugliness and which bears no relation whatever to that simplicity which delights the eye. In the latter case the alloy is generally inferior, thin, and of unpleasant colour. Occasionally both good material and design will be found combined in the same article, but this will be seldom, and in America quite exceptional, save in certain teapots of English make of about 1780.

It is usually asserted that Britannia metal came into use in the year 1769-70, but it seems doubtful if this specific name was then given the alloy, and it is probable that the material as then

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compounded at Sheffield was altogether a different thing from the metal manufactured under that title in later or in recent years.

Mr. Massé, in his book on pewter plate—without reference to the problematical date of the birth of Britannia metal or application of the name—makes the following statement:

“Communion plate is still made in Britannia metal, and a specimen made by Messrs. Dixon & Sons, dated 1751, is preserved in the museum at York.”

This is almost twenty years earlier than the date usually assigned to the first use of Britannia metal. There is no reason, however, why it should not have been made many years previous to that time, and Mr. Massé is probably correct in his estimation of the alloy. That the latter resembles the Britannia metal of to-day less than it does pewter is easily believed.

Mr. Wyllie, in his work on Sheffield plate, gives an interesting glimpse of what in 1769–70 was known as white metal: James Vickers, of Sheffield, having bought the receipt from a workman at that time, advertised in 1787 the manufacture of various articles made of it. Mr. Wyllie, incidentally noting this as one of the many materials

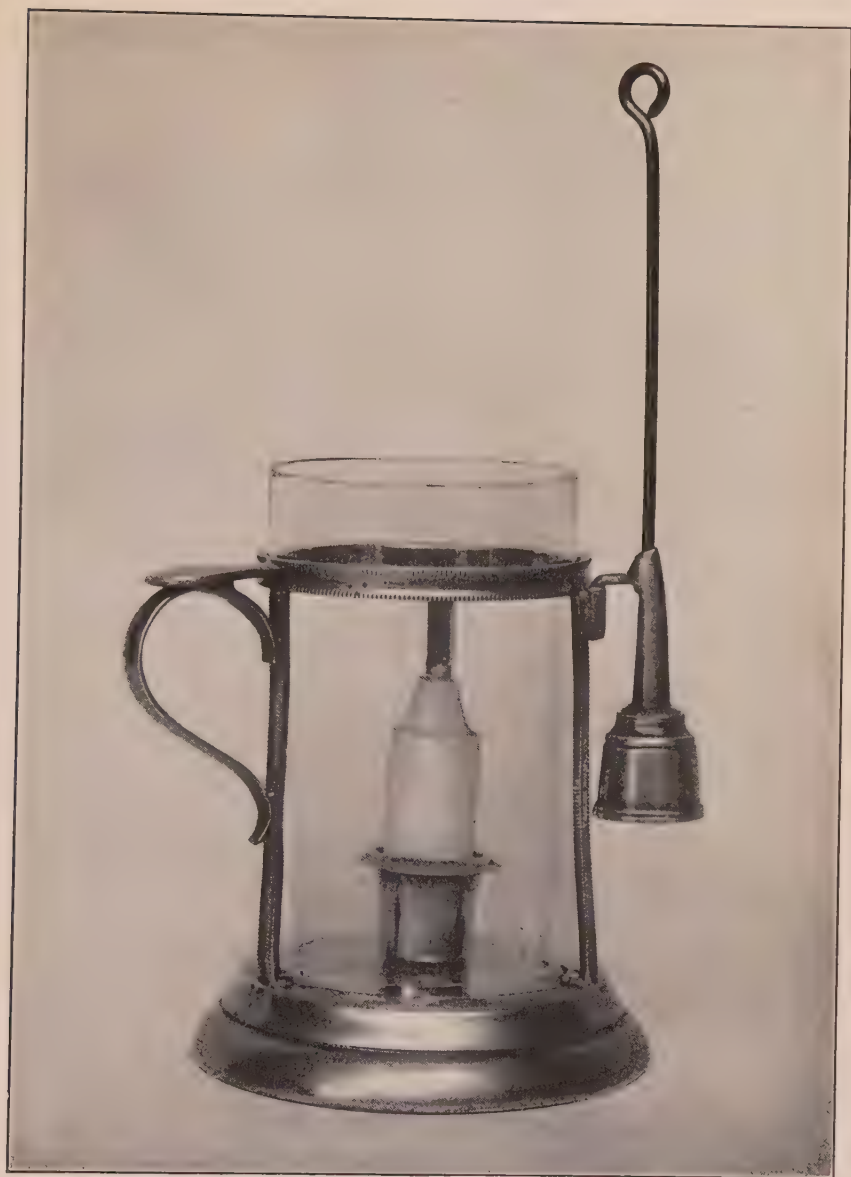


PLATE XXXIV—CANDLE LAMP

Probably American: late eighteenth century. Height of frame, 5 inches.
Marks: none.

Candle lamps of a somewhat similar type were commonly made in other metals, but this example in pewter appears rare. The glass is old. The structural requirements of such a design properly preclude the use of so soft a metal, however pleasing the result.

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then rapidly succeeding pewter, speaks highly of the few articles he has seen composed of it.

This white metal was probably an alloy of tin, antimony, copper, and zinc, while the early Britannia metals were perhaps much the same, with a greater proportion of tin and with the occasional omission of the small constituent part of zinc. The composition of Britannia metal of the nineteenth century and of to-day is no secret whatever; the constituents vary only in degree of the proportions used or in the omission altogether of the minor parts, tin and antimony alone being a favourite composition and our ignorance on the subject of the exact alloy as used by various early makers is only the result of the unimportance of the question and an unwillingness to sacrifice especially fine specimens, which are the only ones worth knowing about from a collector's point of view.

Until further light is thrown on the matter, it may be taken for granted, with a certain degree of safety, whatever the name given the metal, that collectors of pewter may consider the alloys of the late eighteenth century, when lacking lead, as somewhat out of the class to which they are applying themselves and conclude, unless ex-

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amination of the ware proves to the contrary, that the product of James Vickers, Dixon & Sons, and James Dixon & Son is not pewter in the sense best accepted for their purpose.

Collectors equally will recognise the great superiority of these eighteenth-century English alloys over those of the American makers of the nineteenth century, for ware made in this country of Britannia metal after 1800, and certainly after 1820, is a poor apology for either pewter or the early succeeding wares of English origin. This American substitute is found in quantities among the lesser dealers, and is usually offered as pewter, but even the amateur can scarcely be led astray so evident is the difference in quality of alloy as well as in design.

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In Scotland white-iron ware was another successor to pewter, and examples of this are sometimes found, although so seldom as to make reference to it almost an absurdity, especially as the articles found in this country seldom have anything like the texture of old pewter ware. This is altogether a different thing from the white metal manufactured in Sheffield and should not be confused with it in any way. Mr. Wood



PLATE XXXV—MAKER'S TOUCH

American. Reproduced at about double actual size. From the back of a plate.

THOMAS BADGER, BOSTON (1789)

The concentric lines on the body are common to much of the American ware of this and the succeeding period—also to reproductions. Plates of this manufacturer, however, are usually well made and finished, and this individual plate has a well hammered surface at the curve between body and rim.

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makes clear the conditions in Scotland concerning it in the following sentences quoted from his book "Scottish Pewter Ware and Pewterers": "One of the chief causes of the decline of the Pewterers' craft in Scotland, and which accounts for the scarcity of such craftsmen in the various towns in the latter half of the eighteenth century, is to be found in the introduction at an early date in the seventeenth century of a material then known as 'white-iron,' but now more commonly called 'sheet-tin.' Until the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century it had found little favour and made little way, but at that time the tinsmiths or 'white-ironsmiths,' as they are more frequently termed, began to increase in numbers, and eventually drove the pewterers out of the field altogether in all the towns, with the exception of Edinburgh. It is not, indeed, to be wondered that this happened, for the new material was much cheaper than pewter and lighter to handle, while having all the appearance of the dearer metal.

"In these days when almost everything that can be is made of sheet-tin, the collector may laugh at the idea of mistaking a 'white-iron' plate or other vessel for one made of pewter.


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But let him examine the first specimen of really old sheet-tin he comes across and he will at once be struck with the likeness that the material bears to pewter. Such old examples of 'white iron' are as unlike the sheet-tin articles of to-day as chalk is to cheese, the sheet-iron of which they were made being very much thicker and very heavily coated with tin, while the vessels were often given shapes similar to those of pewter ware."

In England and America block-tin or blocked tin was the name commonly given to a like ware; it was extensively made in both countries and in Germany, but the character and method of tinning soon changed, and articles found to-day made of it are usually of the nineteenth century and resemble pewter in but a slight degree.

CHAPTER VII

THE COLLECTION

HE question of whether pewter should be cleaned and polished is open certainly to personal interpretation and desire, but so are various other matters connected with the subject, where, nevertheless, the judgment of those qualified by long experience, not only in this but allied matters, should perhaps carry as much weight as even the consensus of opinion of those who merely skim the surface of conditions pertaining either to the original ware or the reasonable intent and result of its existence in our homes to-day.

It has been commonly said that he who would polish pewter would wilfully remove its chief charm, efface the revered and hardly acquired marks of age, destroy all romantic associations, and, cumulatively, must therefore lack the spirit of true appreciation of antiques. This is the best that has been said. The more irrelevant arguments need not be reviewed.

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In justification to those who hold other views, it seems desirable to point out that while no artist, architect, or sculptor would willingly remove the age-tone from a fresco, the touch of centuries' sun and wind from a Greek marble, or the marvellously acquired patina from a bronze statue, nor clean, polish, or refurbish them, save as a vital necessity to their continued existence, and that while no sane man would destroy time's effect thus miraculously enhancing many creations purely artistic; one may, nevertheless, and with equal sense, remove the rust from an ancestor's coat of mail, keep the silver plate on the sideboard polished, and the old knocker clean. These were once objects of utility, although possessing a certain amount of beauty, and some perceive the action reasonable, even that something more is gained than lost by the process.

To clarify the atmosphere it may be stated that the large majority of collectors who leave their pewter unpolished do so for one of three reasons: thoughtlessness, uncertainty of results, or fear that others for proof of its genuineness may depend upon the all too accustomed signs of dirt, tarnish, and corrosion. For any other good reason

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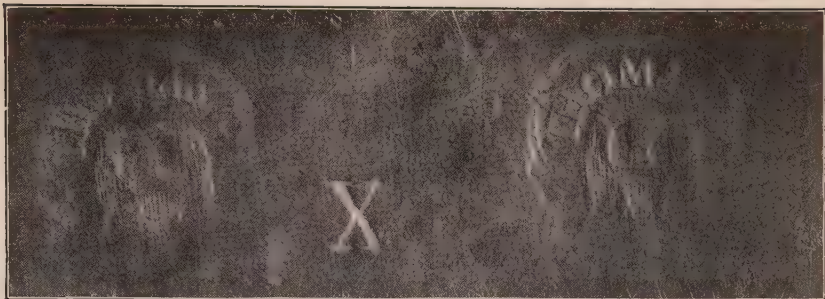


PLATE XXXVI—MAKER'S TOUCH

American. Reproduced, at about double actual size, from the back of a deep plate or dish 11 inches in diameter.

THOMAS D. BOARDMAN
(Of Hartford, Conn., about 1825)

The use of the letter X by American pewterers seems not to have been customary during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and possibly not at any time. Research among American examples of an early period is unfortunately limited, and definite decisions upon many such matters are at present impossible.



PLATE XXXVII—MAKER'S TOUCH

American. Reproduced, at about double actual size, from the face of a bowl.

T. D. B.
(Thomas D. Boardman, Hartford, Conn.,
about 1825)



PLATE XXXVIII—MAKER'S TOUCH

American. Reproduced, at about double actual size, from the face of a bowl.

DANFORTH
(Samuel Danforth, Hartford, Conn., early
nineteenth century)

Note: This maker frequently used three hall-marks. See list of American pewterers.

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one would have to go far, for we are speaking of table plate, and not of the sculpturesque works of the Japanese, nor of Briot or Enderlein.

Beyond this lies what seems the indubitable fact that the oxidisation peculiar to the alloy is one of the most unpleasant results time donates to any substance wrought into beautiful shapes by man, while below this lie a rare softness of hue, a satisfying radiance, an inimitable bloom, and a wellnigh perfect texture.

Quite aside from the matter of polishing, that of having pewter otherwise put into proper condition appears also, if one judges from various collections, to be an open question, but with as little or less real reason.

If practically perfect pieces, as already defined, are the only ones acquired—as has been advocated—it seems foolish not to have these put into a satisfactory condition, which, with the articles being considered, means a judicious approximation to the original form. Bent plates, edges, covers, handles, and knobs should be straightened, and large dents pressed out until the surface assumes the original curve or proper plane. As no article requiring soldering—except possibly at parted joints—should be acquired, no proscribed repair-

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ing will be necessary, and none should be allowed. As no new parts or foreign material therefore are contemplated, and as the most skilful work cannot result in giving an old vessel the appearance of a new one, at least to the accustomed eye, it seems strange that any collector should prefer bent and distorted pieces to those more nearly representative of their purpose and incalculably more reasonable.

Soldering, where allowable, and the whole matter of putting pewter ware into normal condition is, however, recommended to the amateur on the sole basis that the work shall be done by a skilled silversmith, and moreover by one rendered competent by special experience in connection with pewter. Many silversmiths will not undertake the matter at all, and many more, skilled so far as silver work is concerned, are totally lacking in judgment regarding pewter. As there is no great profit in the matter, and as they consistently and naturally enough despise pewter, this is not to be wondered at.

There are, however, silversmiths who have the willingness, a sense of respect of antiques, and other qualifications necessary to perform the work, and it is to these that many collections

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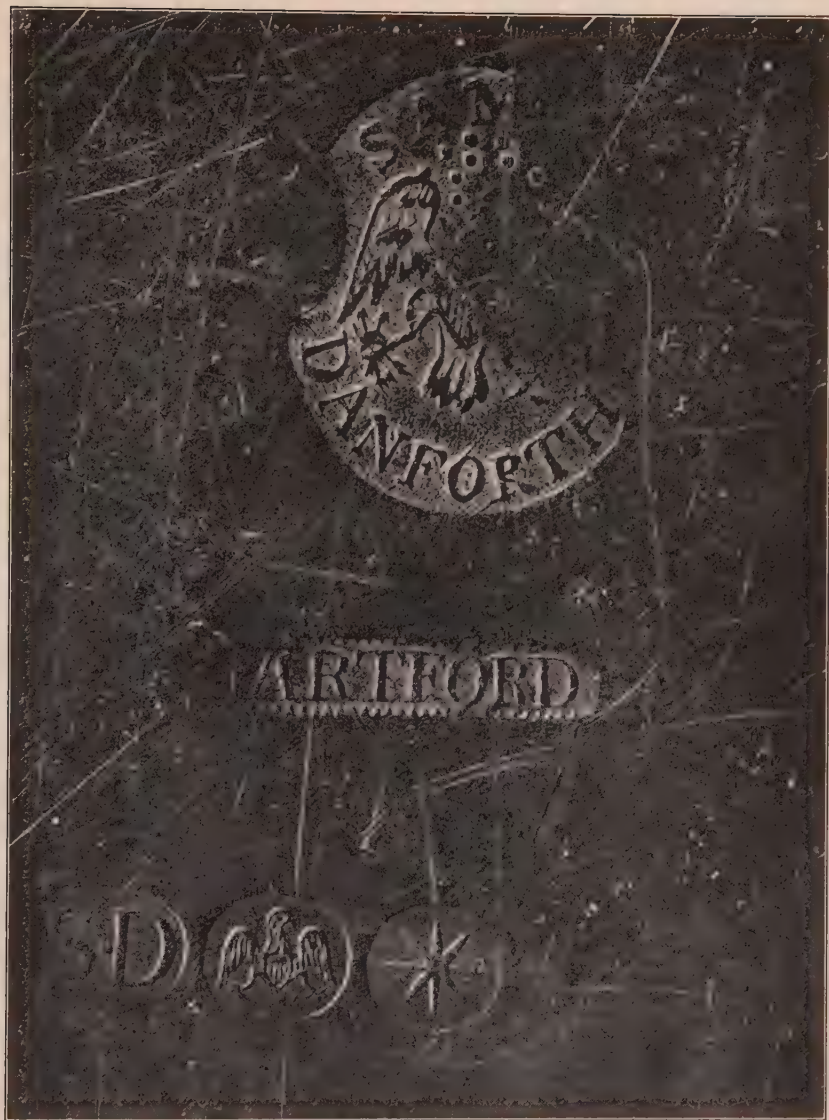


PLATE XXXIX—MAKER'S TOUCH AND HALL-MARKS (SO CALLED)

American. Reproduced at about double actual size; from the back of a deep plate 13 inches in diameter.

SAMUEL DANFORTH, HARTFORD. (About 1810.)

The three hall-marks here shown were sometimes omitted by this maker. The use of hall-marks by American makers after 1780 appears to have been unusual, and this example is rare.

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owe satisfying qualities to an extent so superior to others as to justify the wisdom of urging the amateur to give serious thought to the matter.

With his pewter once in the silversmith's hands, and with sufficient warnings, the amateur is relieved of the most tedious, uninteresting, and even stultifying part of the pewter collector's life, and one which none should assume if time is of any value. The silversmith should know the length of time required to soak the ware and the bath necessary for the purpose; a heavy deposit of oxidisation means a long immersion in a solution of potash or in special acids; tarnish and accumulated grease demand less time in and less strength of the bath; but whichever the case, the covering matter ultimately will be penetrated, and upon applying the power-driven wire brush, or scratch brush as it is commonly called, this will disappear and the true surface emerge soft, clean, and polished. Excessive oxidisation has been referred to before, and with pieces subjected to it the result of the process, of course, does not hold true except in a modified way. Deep erosion cannot be effaced without grinding down the entire surface, and this should not be allowed or essayed until the amateur becomes competent to

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assume the burden of establishing his own standards and principles.

It is not essential to remove minor blemishes, and it is equally injudicious to eradicate the old marks of knife cuts on plates or deep scratches on any vessel, or indeed to destroy the original surface texture in any measure, for time has here aided the alloy, although temporarily covering it with an unsightly coating.

So far, the putting into condition and the polishing of pewter have been earnestly advocated; beyond this each may well decide for himself.

From the scratch brush, so called, the article may be carried to the buffing wheel, to receive the highest finish possible, and then back again to the scratch brush for a mitigating effect. It should be remembered, however, that buffing will quickly destroy the original surface by friction, and that although the pressure applied is slight, the speed obtained by the revolving wheel is tremendous, and that its soft edges can easily remove not only the surface—for this is what it is made for—but also the very substance of the article itself.

Buffing pewter has been referred to as a mortal sin, but it is probable that few thoroughly



PLATE XL—MODERN PEWTER SPOONS AND PORRINGER

American. Spoons, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches and $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches long; Porringer, 5 inches in diameter.

The large spoons were cast in an old mould and are of fair metal and workmanship and of a texture more than usually deceptive. The initials P. R. may truly represent the modern maker, but curiously coincide with those of a famous Colonial silversmith, and undoubtedly have their value where the ware is sold by unscrupulous dealers, to whom, rather than to the manufacturer, the excess profit appears to fall. These are two of a large lot variously dispersed.

The small spoons are of an early pattern but inferior to the large ones in qualities of deception.

The Porringer is of a good type but should not—finished as is this specimen—deceive even the uninitiated.

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understand the process, and that fewer still have had their pewter buffed properly by proper workmen; and as it is a delicate matter it is not surprising that general results have given rise to an abhorrence of the method quite justifiable from the limited point of view employed.

After the pewter has once been put into proper condition and polished by the silversmith, it is still susceptible to improvement by constant rubbing and an occasional home polishing with any of the standard white-metal polishes, and this should do away with the necessity of having it again treated by the silversmith.

As few collectors in America are fortunate enough to possess homes of a character wholly ideal for the housing of antiques, inherited or otherwise, we labour under a greater disadvantage in the display of pewter than do some of the English collectors, and a greater care should be taken by us in its final display than customarily is given to the matter by them, where, amidst surroundings not alone representative, but actually of a period coeval with the general use of pewter, it occupies either its original position or tranquilly adapts itself to another without disturbing the general harmony; and in

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such cases, if the collection itself is not arranged to effect the best results, it is, after all, but one of the minor and faulty details that scarcely are perceived where the ensemble is so nearly perfect.

Put into modern rooms, even if these are fitted throughout with furniture of the eighteenth century or, still the more to be regretted, housed amongst wholly modern surroundings, the utmost care in placing the collection and in its arrangement should be observed. Wherever possible it should be associated with contemporary furnishings, and although the location of a collector is a matter too generally limited by special conditions to admit of much discussion, every collector should be alive to the chance of placing it where incongruities of effect will at least be minimised. Some isolation and a very complete concentration being desirable, each should seek to fulfil these requisites with such favourable surroundings as may be practicable. We cannot in America often escape incongruities. If our furniture is old our room is modern, the room throughout may be old and the house new, but if all are old there is still the lack of historical background and allied traditions, and in a greater or less measure we



PLATE XLI—MODERN PEWTER LAMP

American. Height, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Marks: none.

Bull's-eye pattern, so called. An example of the ware as made to-day in imitation of the old and with the intent that it shall sell as "antique." Oil has been spilled about the wick-holders, the metal artificially dulled, and the bottom filled with plaster of Paris, held in place by a rusty disc of tin. This and somewhat similar patterns have been reproduced for several years.

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are accustomed to view the situation with tolerance. The collection will not, beyond cavil, be perfectly housed, but the amateur should nevertheless exert himself in securing results as nearly reasonable as possible.

The arrangement of the collection, once the location is determined, will, of course, depend somewhat on individual taste; but this should not transgress the law which applies in a greater respect to pewter than to many of the more ephemeral objects sought by collectors. Balance, as far as possible, should be preserved, a symmetrical distribution of vessels of like or approximate form is desirable, and concentration to a degree that really requires fine discernment is essential, and these principles are not to be lightly discarded even by those whose temperament runs counter to such ideas.

The results of a well-ordered and thoughtful arrangement are so infinitely superior to those of a haphazard assortment that it seems unnecessary to dwell upon the subject in detail, or to point out the dangers of a road which already may have been skilfully avoided by the young collector. He may be reminded, however, that dignity and simplicity of arrangement entail not only a regard to

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the proper building up of a background, the recognition of the importance of central features, the acknowledgment of balance and symmetry; but also admit of, and even demand, a brilliancy of grouping and a contrasting of graceful lines with plain surfaces, if the interest is to be sustained in individual pieces and the decorative effect brought to the highest point possible with the material employed.

This forbids messiness, the overlapping of one plate with another, the over-indulgence of mere ingenuity, and all distracting and disorderly combinations, too close a grouping of vessels as too distant a spacing, and it demands assuredly uniformity both in condition of the ware and treatment of the surface.

With pewter may be grouped certain objects of other material, but the experiment is hazardous and should be attempted only by the expert. Silver and Sheffield plate are its enemies, which precludes its use for decorative effect on most sideboards and serving tables, and it is generally better out of the dining-room altogether if silver is present in any quantity. Brass is equally its foe; copper, so far as colour is concerned, may be assorted with it, but copper vessels are usually

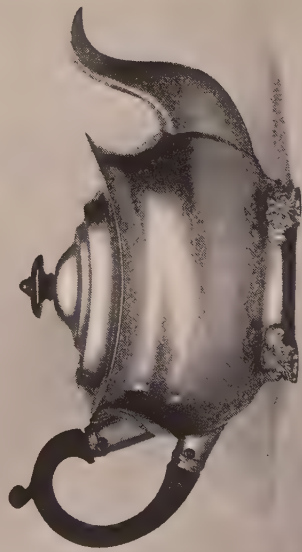


PLATE XLII—BRITANNIA METAL TEAPOT

English: late eighteenth century. Height, 5 inches.

Marks: on bottom, Maker's name.

A simple form of a now traditional type of teapot as developed by the Sheffield manufacturers during the latter quarter of the eighteenth century. Both alloy and style are superior to most of the American-made Britannia metal ware of the same and later periods. The alloy is very thin and fairly hard, but without texture and bloom, and the general type as ill-fitted for the pewter collection as it is—to many—freely admitted.



PLATE XLIII—BRITANNIA METAL TEAPOT

English: late eighteenth century. Height, 7½ inches.

Marks: on bottom, DIXON & SON.

A specimen of conservatively decorated Britannia metal ware, of a model well adapted to the alloy and characteristic of the period. It is vastly superior in design and material to most of the later ware, but far from being pewter in the sense best accepted by collectors. The metal is thin and hard, but lacking the specific attributes of pewter.

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too large of scale and lack refinement of form, and in that respect detract from the collection.

If objects of other material than metal are displayed in conjunction with pewter it is obvious that they should be compatible in purpose, virility of form, and saneness of design and approximately of the same period.

